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ABSTRACT

The proceedings of the First Annual Georgia Conference on Aging contains five papers, reports from discussion groups, and transcripts of a panel discussion. The focus was on the encouragement of self-advocacy and the identification of achievable goals among older adults in order to generate some of the basic political changes that will improve the life chances of the elderly. The proceedings' contents include: Introduction, Barbara P. Payne; The Development of Services for Older Georgians, Mary Kay Jernigan; Contributions to the Quality of Older Persons' Lives: Realistic Expectations, Frank Hughes; Political Responses of the Aged: Research Findings, Robert H. Binstock; Achievable Goals for Older Georgians: Reports from Discussion Groups; The Senior Center and the City of Atlanta, a Panel Discussion, Al Horvath, moderator; The Revolution of the Elders, Margaret E. Kuhn; and The Future of Contributions to the Quality of Older Persons' Lives, David G. Salten. (JR)

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POLITICAL RESPONSES TO AGING

Proceedings

of the

First Annual Georgia Conference on Aging

held at

Georgia State University / Atlanta

MAY 9–10, 1974

Edited by

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FOREWORD

Political Responses to Aging represents what we hope will be a long series of conferences on different issues in gerontology jointly sponsored by the University of Georgia and Georgia State University. Our plan is to alternate these conferences between the campuses; the second annual Georgia conference on aging will be held at the University of Georgia in Athens in April of 1975.

Editing transcripts of tape recordings--without gaps--is a laborious business, and I wish to express thanks to Norma Reed, Kathy Purcell, and Debbie Clarke for their assistance in the preparation of these proceedings. Also, thanks should go to Beverly Stephens and Howard Openshaw of Georgia State University for their help in putting this conference together. Recognition should go to the cooperating organizations that did so much work on this program:

Georgia Department of Human Resources, Office of Aging
American Association of Retired Persons--National Retired Teachers Association
Georgia Gerontology Society
National Caucus on Black Aging
National Council on the Aging
Senior Citizens Services of Metropolitan Atlanta

Special thanks, of course, should go to the star of the show, Maggie Kuhn, the leader of the Gray Panthers. We hope that we have set down an accurate record of her presentation to the conference; the reader will find Chapter Six of these proceedings to be a remarkable document. Maggie is a remarkable person, and she represents all that is admirable in the generation of older Americans.

James A. Thorson
Athens, Georgia

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INTRODUCTION

In this volume are the papers presented and recommendations made by the first annual Georgia conference on aging held May 9-10, 1974, at the Urban Life Center on the Georgia State University campus.

An annual Georgia conference on aging was initiated and was sponsored by Georgia State University and the University of Georgia to make the resources of the two universities available to senior citizens, practitioners in the delivery of services to older adults, and concerned community leaders. Each year the conference will focus on a specific topic, issue, or problem relevant to the development of a quality life for older people and the supportive environment needed to achieve this goal. These conferences will provide information and interpretation of research in aging by outstanding authorities in the nation and the state, promote the self-advocacy of senior citizens and increase public awareness of the potential and the problems of the aged in Georgia and the Southeastern region.

It is fitting that the Georgia Conference was among the first to be held in Georgia State's new Urban Life continuing education center and during the first year of Georgia State's graduate program in aging. The new center, like its counterpart, the University of Georgia Center for Continuing Education, is a concrete expression of the commitment of the University System of Georgia to extend the System's resources to all segments of Georgia's population.

In the fall of 1973, the first students enrolled in Georgia State's graduate degree program in aging. The degree program in the sociology of aging is designed to prepare students for these areas in gerontology: (1) health care and management of facilities for the aged; (2) for staff positions in community organizations and governmental agencies delivering services to the aged; and (3) as teachers and researchers in aging. The "aging" students were actively involved in planning and participating in this conference.

The subject of this year's conference, Political Response to Aging, was particularly timely in an election year. The major gubernatorial candidates reflect this by including some "aging planks" in their platforms. The city of Atlanta has expressed an interest and a determination to expand its services to older Atlantians. State legislators have responded to political pressures from the National Retired Teachers Association and the American Association of Retired Persons, and from the Georgia Gerontology Society, to form a sub-committee to consider the problems peculiar to the elderly in the State Senate.

As the opportunities to make some basic political changes that will improve the life chances of the elderly increase, it is important that

older citizens be challenged to self-advocacy and to identify achievable goals. This was the focus of the papers, addresses, and discussion groups of the conference.

The increase in the numbers and percent of older persons in the national and state population since 1900, coupled with the prediction that as much as fifty percent of the nation's population will be over 50 years of age by the year 2000, adds to the timeliness and the urgency of an annual state conference to tackle the issues and develop an action strategy to cope with the challenges of a mature population.

Georgia has its share of the growth of an older population. A "Profile of Older Georgians" reports that in this century, the percentage of Georgia's population aged 65 and over has more than doubled (from 3.1 percent in 1900 to 8.0 percent in 1970), while the number increased more than five-fold, from 66,000 to nearly 368,000. One fourth of the older population lives in Metropolitan Atlanta. The largest concentration of black aged is also in Atlanta. The political problem of providing needed services for older Georgians in larger cities and small towns is a key issue. It is easier to provide these services in the cities with areas of higher concentration of older people than in the rural areas and small towns. But, the need of the older Georgian may be the same.

The question is, do the aged have power, and what are the achievable goals toward which that power can be channeled? Out of the facts presented and the action of the participants will come some answers to the question raised by the first annual conference.

We are indebted to the people who participated in the program or in other ways gave their time and support to the conference. The Office of Aging, Georgia Department of Human Resources, provided major assistance in the planning and promoting of the conference. Miss Mary Kay Jernigan, Director of the Office on Aging, served as an effective member of the program committee and gave the keynote address.

James A. Thorson is due a special expression of appreciation. He carried out the major portion of the plans and contributed his usual efficiency and insight.

The conference had the participation of 121 persons, including older adults, agency staff, students, and community leaders. Next year's conference will be held at the University of Georgia in Athens, on April 9 and 10, 1975, and we anticipate that the conference will play an increasingly important role in the affairs of aging in Georgia--and in the Region.

Barbara P. Payne
Atlanta

CHAPTER I

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SERVICES FOR OLDER GEORGIANS

--MARY KAY JERNIGAN

MARY KAY JERNIGAN

I am very proud and pleased to be with the Department of Human Resources, specifically the Office of Aging. This morning as we are getting together, I would like to summarize briefly some of the development of services in the state of Georgia. There is no way I can avoid linking that to the development of services for older persons in the nation. From our perspective in the Office of Aging in the Department of Human Resources, I would like to comment on the historical basis of this conference which Dr. Payne has just opened. It is the first conference in the history of the state of Georgia jointly sponsored by two of the very great Universities in this state. We are extremely pleased to see this development. Not only that, but they have billed it as the first annual conference, which I think clearly indicated they have stepped out and intend to go forward from here. And this is the establishment of a historical base in new conference activity in the State of Georgia in relation to older people.

My topic is development of services to older Georgians. What I would like to do with this topic is develop something of a general framework in a historical perspective from the state of the art. Then we will move toward focusing on the larger theme of this conference, which is political responses to the aging. I think that, hopefully, this will be developing political responses to the aging.

First of all I would like to just stop a moment and clarify that the office I represent does not deal in direct services to older people. While I will be commenting on the development of services for older people, our office does not deliver services directly. Rather, we serve as a catalyst in state government for the development, and hopefully the expansion of services to older persons. We do this in a number of ways. These programs are just one of the resources that we can bring to bear in the state.

Our job is to serve as a catalyst for both the development of services for older people and opportunities for older people. This is at the state and the local level. We work both within the Department of Human Resources in an attempt to effect responsiveness on the part of the operating divisions of the department, between departments of state government, at the local and stste level and with the public and private sector. I do want to clearly underline that we work very, very closely with the private sector and are not just a public oriented agency.

I have used the term catalyst rather than advocate. I think we use the term advocate an awful lot in our society in this day and time. We are frequently referred to as being an advocate for older people, but I somehow prefer to use the word catalyst for our activities. I think that with state government, federal government, and local government, there is always a risk we run of becoming bureaucratized. If you look in the dictionary for the definition of the work "catalyst", you find it is an agent inserted into a situation or solution, which hopefully affects change but when removed is not changed itself. So, our stake is not for the development of our office, but for the development of service to older people.

I think the real advocacy or the real acting on behalf of older people must come primarily from those of you who are older Georgians. We pledge you our support, we reach out our hand to you, we want to advocate with you and not just for you.

I think in order to consider the development of services in the state of Georgia, we need to look at where we have been and where we are now, and hopefully where we are going. I would like to do this in terms of where we have been in the nation in the development of services, and where we have been in the state of Georgia in relation to that. First of all, we have not come very far in this country yet. We have just begun to think in terms of services of special needs of older people.

I think every one in this audience is aware of the fact that at the turn of the century life expectancy was nowhere near what it is now; about one out of every 25 persons in the country was 65 or older. At the present time, we are approaching one out of ten, and of course 65 is a young, young age. So we have not had an older population, by the general definition of 65 or older, for a very long time with us in this country. We have not had a very substantive proportion for a very long period of time. At the turn of the century, the life expectancy was low. Not many persons could expect to live beyond their working days--the days in which they were meaningfully employed. With the advances in medical care during this Century, I think we all know what has happened; the older population has burgeoned, tremendously grown, and at least one out of every ten is now 65 or older.

Back in 1909, President Theodore Roosevelt convened the first White House Conference on Children and Youth. It was 53 years later, in 1961, before there became sufficient empathy for a similar conference to be convened in relation to older people. This was brought about primarily by the pushing and urging and coaxing of developing organizations of older people and persons interested in working with older people such as the National Council on Aging, the American Association of Retired Persons and National Retired Teachers Association, the National Council of Senior Citizens--groups of citizens who were interested in seeing the nation, the government, the public sector take some kind of concerted stand against what could happen to our older people.

In 1912, three years after the first White House Conference on Children and Youth, the Federal Government set up the U.S. Children's Bureau to do research in the field of child welfare, to do educational programs relating to children's needs, and to serve as a federal focal point for the needs of the nation's children. Again, it took us 54 more years before a similar move was made in the federal government in relation to older people, when, in 1965, with the passage of the Older Americans Act, a federal focal point was set up in the Administration on Aging in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

So, in effect, in the first half of the century no more than lip service was really given to providing services on the state, federal or local level for older people. The first major step came, I think, in the 1930s with the passage of the original Social Security Act when some income helps began dribbling down from the federal level into the hands

of older people. The question of providing health care from public funds was debated about this same time, as a matter of Congressional debate, but nothing came of this until the 1960s with the passage of the Kerr-Mills Act. This resulted in the program of medical assistance, to the aged which was one of the forerunners of Medicare as we know it now.

Gains in other aspects of programs affecting older people were equally slow in coming and equally unwieldy as they came down the plank: housing assistance to the aged, social services for the aged, educational opportunities, employment helps. At the same time the country was witnessing a decline in the number of years persons worked, with many organizations moving toward mandatory retirement. Life expectancy was increasing thus shrinking the number of work years and expanding the period of lifetime activity with very few helps from the public sector in developing employment opportunities for second careers for older people. This is how far we have progressed with strong development of services for older people; it has been a miserably short distance.

In those earlier days we had many people who were interested in planning for older people, but very few people planning with them. We are with the birth of the movement. In 1961, President Eisenhower convened a White House Conference on Aging--the first major attempt, to help a range of service providers to focus together on needs of older people. There were not too many older people specifically identified and brought to this conference to my understanding. One of the major accomplishments of that conference was increasing pressure for a form of national health insurance for all older people which ultimately resulted in Medicare. This was through the primary efforts of citizens' organizations, not service providers.

Georgia's delegation to that White House Conference back in 1961 immediately started working on what had been one of the major administrative recommendations of the White House Conference, that within the federal government there be set up a focal point, and that that unit of federal government be charged with the responsibility of coordinating a range of activities designed to meet the needs of older people. A similar recommendation was that within each of the units of state government in the country, a focal point be set up to do likewise. Georgia's delegation to the 1961 White House Conference came right home and began working with the Georgia General Assembly so that in March of 1962 a focal point within the State Government was set up and given the broad responsibility in the language of the law, to "study, investigate, promote, plan and execute a program to meet the needs of aging Georgians." That is a pretty broad responsibility.

That was Georgia's first attempt at beginning to focus in on developing services and opportunities for older people. The agency which was set up was the old State Commission on Aging, comprised of 14 members appointed by the governer of the state of Georgia, representing the fields of housing, social services, medical care, education, leisure time activities, recreation, spiritual needs--the gamut of things that affect older people.

It was in 1965, with the passage of the Older Americans Act, that the permanent focal point was set up on the federal level in the form of the Administration on Aging. At that time, the Administration on Aging was authorized to conduct research and demonstration projects throughout the nation, to develop training help for persons engaged in the field of aging, and to administer a grants program in the states for the development of a range of demonstration programs. How we could go about meeting the major objectives were loosely identified then as: providing an adequate income, providing adequate health care, providing adequate housing--kind of broad, general ephemeral objectives, but a start.

Along about the same time in the U.S. Senate, a Special Committee on Aging was set up on a bipartisan basis to begin a broad study of what types of legislation were needed to alleviate the growing problems of older people in the fields of housing, retirement income, employment, etc. The Older Americans Act began to change and develop, and in 1969 some new functions were added, giving the state units on aging additional responsibilities for statewide planning, evaluation of programs in existence, coordination of ongoing activities, public information, staff development--a range of things. Those 1969 Amendments added a new program and a new look to the field of aging of which we all are very, very proud: a look at the need for older people to fill meaningful roles.

The Retired Senior Volunteer Program was authorized in the 1969 Ammendments to the Older Americans Act. It took a little while before it could get funded and get under way, but at last we began to really look at the fact that one of the basic needs of older people is the provision of a service opportunity, more than just food, clothing, and shelter. This complimented the already very, very successful Foster Grandparent Program which had been tried on a demonstration basis. In 1969, that program was expanded as well.

I would like to briefly review developments of the last couple of years. In 1971, the second White House Conference on Aging was convened, but this time it was done differently. We had learned an awful lot from the Office of Economics Opportunity about achieving citizen participation, and the fact that what we need to do is not plan for but to plan with people. As we approached the 1971 White House Conference on Aging and we finally got it all together, we began putting the emphasis on what older people themselves were actually saying. We had a series of neighborhood forums which were conducted throughout the nation and in Georgia as well in the year 1970. We had actually almost a three year process in the 1971 White House Conference on Aging. And all through the state, all through the communities of the state, and all through the nation, older people came together in small groups and sat down with service providers and decision makers and told them what they really thought they needed. They came on crutches and they came with great difficulty, but they came to tell those people who were sitting on the panels of decision makers what they really felt they needed. It was a beautiful experience to watch, and I know many of you in this room were involved. That was followed by, in each of the fifty states, a state White House Conference in which all the thinking of the state was

assembled and then taken on to Washington. Approximately 50% of the conference attendants of the 1971 White House Conference on Aging were 65 and older; I do not remember what the median age was, but it was astounding.

This time I think the voices were heard. A number of political alliances formed along the way, groups came together to put their heads together to effect political responses to older people, a National Caucus on the Black Aged developed, as well as a number of urban coalitions of older people. And political responses developed.

Let me digress just a moment. At about the same time, one of the developments which came immediately out of the White House Conference on Aging was the passage of the new nutrition program for the elderly, Title VII of the Older Americans Act. It was passed within three months after the 1971 White House Conference. It authorized a substantial funding level, but the appropriation was not forthcoming for another year. When we get fully geared up, we will be able to serve under the present appropriation, no more than 4,000 hot meals a day throughout the entire state. That, however, does not mean there are just 4,000 people being served; the program operates on a five-day a week basis. Not all people who participate in the program want to go five full days, some go maybe one day a week or two days a week, so there are some multiple figures there. But let us not kid ourselves, this is no more than a drop in the bucket.

In 1972, we experienced in the State of Georgia a massive reorganization of the state government, at which time the old Commission on Aging, along with a number of other large operating units of state government and some smaller ones, were merged into a brand new Department of Human Resources. All the policy-making functions were transferred to the Board of Human Resources and all the operating functions of the old Commission were transferred intact as the Office of Aging, which is the office I represent. This gave us a brand new opportunity to have an open door for responsiveness on the part of the major service providers and the public sector in this state with the Division of Physical Health, the Division of Mental Health, Vocational Rehabilitation, Benefits Payments, Community Services. So, simultaneously with the development on the federal level, in many, many states reorganization is occurring in an attempt to bring about a better integration of a range of services not just to older people, but to all people.

I could go on and on with this history. The most recent piece of significant legislation affecting services for older people is the Comprehensive Services Amendment to the Older Americans Act. I want to very clearly here spell out that the Older Americans Act and the Comprehensive Services Amendment are nothing but seed monies, in my opinion. Although we hear a lot of heralding about the passage of the Older Americans Act, it is a drop in the bucket also. It is a good, tremendous forward step, though, in that it lay a framework for a new set of relationships between service providers and older people themselves for their input and thinking on what plans should be developed.

What the Comprehensive Services Amendments do in relation to Title III, the program for state and area programs on aging, is give us the beginnings of a setting up of similar focal points at the substate level that we now have at the state level in the Office of Aging and at the federal level in the Administration on Aging. This Title III of the Older Americans Act requires that each of the fifty states have a state unit on aging. The last state came into the program the year before last--that was Indiana. Each state must subdivide into substate areas in keeping with those areas developed by the government of each state for planning purposes. In Georgia these are the Area Planning and Development Commission boundries, which many agencies are aligning with this at this time.

After the state is subdivided into these substate areas, an Area Agency on Aging within that area may be designated by the State Agency as the sole agent with which the State Agency will deal for the development of a comprehensive plan of coordinated services to help older people to stay out of institutions unnecessarily. Now, monies can flow into that area or funnel through the Area Agency on Aging, but the Area Agency on Aging is designed to be a planning body and not to provide the direct services, just as we in the State Office are the planning, catalytic body and not the provider of direct services, unless there is not a group in the area that can deliver the services. A part of the process is that before an agency is designated as the Area Agency on Aging, local government must be given an opportunity to comment on the appropriateness of that group's becoming the designated agency. I was very, very surprised when we undertook this part of the process at the quick involvement we began achieving with local government officials calling, writing, and commenting on the plan and calling, writing, requesting information about what the program was. It is an interesting and very exciting process.

We are finding as we tell local government officials specifically, "This is our thinking, will you give us your remarks, will you give us your comments?", that we have been getting a tremendous number of responses and dialogue is underway which we have never had before. I have been impressed with the fact that apparently in this nation we had left the local government out of the planning of programs for older people. The program had been up to the federal and to the state level and matching had pretty much been in-kind. Local government officials had apparently not been drawn into the process.

This is changing now. The whole intent of the Comprehensive Services Amendments as I read them, is to draw into the partnership which had previously existed with the federal and state level, a third partner, the local government, and to draw it in very, very, very strongly. We look toward local government in terms of new sources of funding with revenue sharing becoming a reality now. The service needs are many, the funds are few. Unless we are genuinely able to capture the commitment of the full public sector and the private sector, we do not stand a chance.

The signs are encouraging. After the White House Conference of 1971, many new national, state, and local organizations began directing new activities toward what we can do to meet the needs of older people.

The American Red Cross has made many, many new commitments to older people. I could go on and on listing the private organizations who are getting heavily involved now who had not been before. These are untapped resources which we have let go by as we have attempted to develop sources in a vacuum, with each agency preparing its own program. The time has come to put our resources together in coordinated activity, because there just are not that many available, we can not afford not to.

In the 1972 presidential elections, statistics indicated that not too many of the newly enfranchised youth group voted, old people did vote. This is a matter of record now.

Were are we now? In the development of services for older Georgians, we are not very far. The pooling of untapped resources is a phrase we are hearing a great deal about now. It is a pretty phrase for saying "going out and finding new money" or going out and finding money that had not been directed toward older people before. We have got to learn to speak our needs clearly to decision-makers, we have got to learn to request their help, and to speak out unapologetically.

This is May of 1974 and this is Older Americans Month. That is a change from what it has been in the past; you may remember it as Senior Citizen's Month when you have seen it before. I think this is a good change, I think this is more "telling it like it is." As we talked with many people they said they do not like the term "Senior Citizens," so the name has been changed to Older Americans Month. Many of you may not agree with this; we would like your thinking on this. This has happened at the national level. The President, in his proclamation, set this month's theme to be "Older Americans: A National Resource."

This is good and lends credence to what all of us who have been working in the field have been aware of for a long, long time--that there is an untapped resource in the nation's older people in terms of wisdom, skill and capacity to give of themselves. For this reason, let us celebrate this month and celebrate it in terms of older Americans being a national resource. But let us not let ourselves be caught in the trap of being diverted by this celebration into ignoring the fact that inflation is eating away like flame into the pocketbooks of persons who are living on fixed incomes. Many people go to nursing homes simply because there is not another arrangement available for them, no alternative to that form of institutionalization. Income is inadequate, housing is inadequate, minds go idle because of a lack of intellectual stimulation. Their human dignity is drained away by idleness when the mind could be successfully put to use in educational opportunities or meaningful leisure time activities. Transportation systems to help older people keep mobile and out of isolation are in wretched shape. Some people die of malnutrition simply because they do not have enough money to cook well balanced meals or do not have the incentive to cook them.

The development of services in the nation and in Georgia was the topic I was asked to address. Where is the development of services in Georgia? I sincerely think it is ahead of us, not behind us. Thank you.

CHAPTER II

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE QUALITY OF OLDER PERSONS' LIVES: REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

--FRANK HUGHES

FRANK HUGHES

You have given me a two-pronged assignment. One is to report what legislation was passed in the 1974 General Assembly of Georgia that was of concern to the more than 376,000 retired people in Georgia. This was fairly easy. It required the searching of records, listing the proposed acts that were passed and became law and those that died at various stages toward becoming law. The other, anticipating what legislation might be feasible in the 1975 session of the legislature, is an uncertain factor. Man has always been preoccupied with the possibility of prophecy. Methods have been employed through the centuries as so-called sciences for looking into the future but they all failed. Discussion of future legislation is difficult and hazardous. I think any speaker should know his subject, but no man can know the future actions of legislators or will-be legislators, for there has been an average of 20% change in the Georgia General Assembly in the past 80 years. And you cannot predict what state executives might do after legislation has passed. Anyway, there is little profit in legislative prophecy. Discussion of the legislative future may even be perilous or dangerous.

Even though one of the most persistent human aspirations is to know the future, people have usually rejected their prophets and slain them. It is little comfort that they love their martyrs and honor those they crucify. A wise man once said, "That veil which covers the face of the future was woven by the hand of mercy." The awareness of future fortune would make people careless, and a foreknowledge of adversity would bring despair and induce insensibility to present opportunities. Now, even with the slide rule and the magic of the computer, modern man can make only puny predictions or guesses which penetrate no more than the thin edge of advancing time.

With this prologue, let me get into the certain side of this discourse: proposed legislative programs that were in the last session of the General Assembly. You will notice the word programs is plural because I will include here the proposed program of more than one organization concerned with retired and aging people. As Chairman of the Legislative Committee of the Georgia Gerontology Society, I report that the committee established three priorities. The first was to work toward the establishment of a committee on aging in both the House of Representatives and the Senate of the General Assembly. Due to the fact that work was started after the legislature was in session, and presently the number of full committees that can be had is limited, a subcommittee on Aging of the Health and Welfare Committee was established in the Senate: Senator Hamilton of Macon is Chairman, Senator Langford of Calhoun is Vice Chairman, and Senator Gerard of Atlanta is Secretary. After the committee book for the House was printed for the second time, and our committee had contacted the speaker a second time, I was told that the House subcommittee was set up under the Human Resources Committee with Representative Harrington of Milledgeville as Chairman, Representative Williams of Gainesville, Vice Chairman, and Representative Wilson of Marietta, Secretary. Now, I am not at all sure about this. You know there is a great deal of hanky-panky that goes on in the legislature and this may be one of those cases. Since legislation is often a series of compromises, these subcommittees are a step, the first in the right direction.

The second priority was an increase in the homestead exemption for people 65 and above. House Bill 2114 provides for tax relief for the elderly homeowner that occupies his home, under two conditions: Market value must be less than $25,000, and the individual system's school board must implement the plan. This bill passed the House and Senate and was signed by the Governer.

The third priority was increased status for the Office of Aging. Since this agency deals with the well-being of aging people (you will notice I did not say the welfare, I said the well-being of aging people) and is the liaison agency between the federal and state governments concerning funds, it is felt by aging people to be a very important agency. This was thought to be an internal administrative matter by many that we contacted and no legislation was proposed.

I have the privilege of serving as an ex-officio member of the joint state legislative committee of the National Retired Teachers Association and the American Association of Retired Persons and I work with their legislative proposals. This committee, representing more than 65,000 members in Georgia, was working toward a consumer protection act. House bill 255 was such a proposal. It was reported as a committee substitute, it was postponed, it was reconsidered. It passed the House, was transmitted to the Senate, and was unfavorably reported by the Senate Committee. The Consumer Protection Act is considered most important for the elderly. They seem to be the prime target of con men and dishonest men in commerce and business. I talked to the director of the Alabama program and was told that it recovered $105,000 for the Alabama people during the first five months of its operation.

The NRTA-AARP state committee is promoting a uniform probate court. Such an act has been passed in some of the states and is pending in the Florida and Vermont legislatures now. Its passage is of great concern to aging people. However, the time did not seem right to even introduce such a proposal in Georgia. Attorneys seem to think it needs much study since it would make minor changes in more than 200 laws now on the books.

No-fault insurance is a concern of the elderly, and was the concern of the above mentioned committees. House Bill 78, after committee substitutes in both House and Senate, and four amendments in both branches of the legislature, passed and was signed by the Governer. However, our Association attorneys believe that a proper basis exists for questioning Section 17 of the Act as it applies to physical examinations. Further, according to a recent actuarial study for the U.S. Department of Transportation, a 16% decrease in the auto insurance premiums would be occasioned in Georgia if reasonable restrictions were put on court action. The Association's attorneys further stated that something is drastically wrong with the national system that takes in $16 billion annually in premiums and pays back to the insured only $8.4 billion in claims. This is less than 52% paid in claims when the break even point is 72%. This indicates a clear 20% gain in this field of insurance. The bill had to go through two conference committees before the House and Senate could agree. This attests to its complicated nature.

Senate Bill 530 sponsored by both the NRTA-AARP joint committee and the Georgia Retired Teachers Association, has as its purpose the removal of the inequities from the present independent public school retirement systems. These systems are in Fulton County, the City of Atlanta, the City of Rome, and Chatham County. A state act two years ago placed for the state system a floor of $9 per month per service year as retirement pay. For instance, a teacher with 40 years service would receive at least $360 per month in the state system. Now, a teacher with the same experience in Atlanta might be receiving $125 per month or less. This bill, when it becomes effective, will equalize retirement from the independent systems with the state retirement system. The bill passed both the House and the Senate and was signed by the governor, but it is dependent on the passage of Constitutional Resolution HR511-1512. This resolution will be submitted to the electorate in the November election. We should support the passage of this constitutional amendment and give a minimum income to about 600 older retirees who are in dire need, who are so proud that they will starve before they will accept welfare.

House Bill 1388, which would have required hospitals to submit itemized statements on hospital bills, died in the House Health and Ecology Committee.

House Bill 1310 revised county voters registrar procedures concerning absentee ballots and permits any citizen 65 or above to vote by absentee ballot, even if he is not considered physically unable to go to the poles. This will allow many more senior citizens to exercise their franchise. As was mentioned this morning, a larger percentage of the elderly vote than do even the average age or the younger voters. I believe that surveys show throughout the United States that in the last presidential election 80% of those over 65 years of age voted, whereas the proportion of the general population voting was pitifully low. This bill passed the House and the Senate and was signed by the Governer on February 25.

House Bill 709 is designated to spur production of moderate income housing for families with $7,200 to $12,000 in income. This was a state bill. It passed the House and the Senate and was signed by the Governor. House Bill 481, designated to do the same thing for the city of Atlanta, passed the House by committee substitute but died in the Senate Committee.

I have reported on a dozen bills, measures or objectives that more directly concerned the aged. There are others that indirectly affect the aged. The list is by no means exhaustive, but these are the measures that I followed in varying degrees of interest during the 1974 session of the General Assembly.

Now, for the hazardous, uncertain objectives included in the second phase of this discourse: First, I think it reasonable that we and the aging should follow to some kind of conclusion the measures that have attained some degree of success for aging people. Legislative effort should continue to work toward a committee on aging in both the House and Senate. This would give mature people an entry to give the law-making body information on their actual needs. A committee with full

status in each house in the General Assembly is a reasonable request and requires little or no appropriation, and that is usually the roadblock, appropriation.

Efforts of the aging should follow through on the passage of the constitutional resolution HR511-1512 which would activate Senate Bill 530 and render aid to about 600 elderly teachers who are in dire need. The appropriation to activate this act is less than one million dollars annually, and will grow less each year as they pass on to their eternal reward. And finally, no appropriation of funds would be needed out there in the future somewhere. HR511-1512 will be given a position and number on the ballot for the November general election. It will then be advertised.

The Consumer Protection Bill, now House Bill 255 dies with the biennium and would have to be reintroduced in the first session of the new biennium to be considered by the members of the General Assembly in 1975. Consumer protection benefits people of all ages and we are interested in this phase of the objectives of the proposal, but aging people are the prime targets, and percentage-wise more often fall victim to the operations of the dishonest so-called businessmen. We should actively support some type of consumer protection measure. National organizations have developed informative and protective service programs to encourage and train aging people to be on the alert for the door-to-door bunko artists. Often the octogenerian does not understand correctly. Sometimes we get confused and fail to understand these fast-talking con men.

The history and purpose of the Uniform Probate Code should be thoroughly studied because of the ongoing efforts across the nation on behalf of the code. This effort actually started in the mid 40s when the American Bar Association, through the Real Property Probate and Trust Section, produced what was then called a model code. It was the result of an enormous volume of research of the probate statutes of all the states. The final draft was approved in the Uniform Law Conference in 1969 and was printed in 1970. It, the Uniform Probate Code, has been changed to some minor degree in each of the states that has adopted it. One of the real needs is to reestablish public confidence in the sole ownership of property till death and the will as the primary instrument of the estate planning. Probate laws of the states are unsatisfactory because of the interstate law. A will made in one state may not be good in another state. That is being found the case in Florida. Many people retire from other states and go to Florida and they find that their wills are no good. Unfortunately, it is usually the case that somebody else finds it out after they are deceased. Then, we are a nation on wheels. Forty million people changed houses in 1972. Older people retire in one state and move to another. We should at least ask for an interim committee to make a thorough study of this situation looking toward the adoption of the Uniform Probate Code in Georgia. I have already mentioned that the adoption of the Uniform Probate Code is being seriously considered in Vermont and Florida in the present sessions of their legislatures.

The no-fault insurance act passed in the last session of the General Assembly should be observed very closely for the first year's operation and the bugs worked out two years hence. I sense that it is the feeling of the Office of Aging, and I an now serving on the Advisory Council of that Agency, that some system should be devised that would require thorough research on any proposal prior to its introduction as a bill in the legislature. This would forestall one man's wild ideas, and it would prevent the loss of thousands of man hours in the consideration of such bills introduced. In the 1974 session, more than 2100 bills and 819 resolutions were introduced in the House alone. 612 of these reached the Governor's desk, and it was necessary to veto 30 of them. Here is where the research was done after the fact rather than before the fact. 1166 bills and resolutions were introduced in the Senate, 170 were submitted to the Governor and 23 were vetoed. A grand total of 4,094 ideas were considered in some degree in the last session of the Legislature. Had research been done before the fact rather than after the fact, bills would not have been hastily thrown together, and thousands of man-hours of valuable time of many legislators could have been saved.

Some sure form of ad valorem tax relief should be granted people 65 and above with limited income. House Bill 214 was enacted and signed by the governor, but the red tape is too much for the elderly. It is effective if the local school board activates it and if application is made annually by a specified date. This is two if-fy for mature people. Some elderly are like the man who said my bifocals are fine, my dentures are great, my hearing aid is good, but I certainly do miss my mind. These people need simplicity in ad valorem tax relief that they may live their last years in their own homes.

Seventy-two percent of those above 65 years of age still own their own homes and institutionalization should be the last resort. Divesting of property is a harsh requirement of the aging before entering an institution. Some insurance companies are now contemplating home helper policies, that would allow a person, not a registered nurse, not even a licensed practical nurse, to come into the home for a few hours during the day to do the necessary housework, a home helper in the true sense of the word.

Taxes on non-profit nursing homes should not be allowed to hang by the thin thread of a court decision that can be reversed at any time Plans for construction and operation are so unsure that churches and non-profit organizations are afraid to take the venture to furnish these much needed services.

Grants to qualified colleges and agencies for training gerontology students to work with research on services for the aging, improvement of delivery systems, and a thorough understanding of the needs of the elderly and how to meet these needs should be made by both the state and the federal government. The state grants already have a precedent in the future teacher grants, with the stipulation that the student will work in Georgia for a specified number of years. This same principle, this same concept could be applied to gerontological students.

There is much concern by the elderly over having to travel great distances and wait in long lines for renewal of state driver's licenses. This can be solved by additional stations and mobile licensing bureaus moving about the counties and cities. A subcommittee on legislation of the NRTA-AARP state committee contacted the State Department of Transportation Division of Public Safety and found that some additional stations were being considered. Some have been, at this time, put into operation.

At the national level, there are three measures of legislation to which I think we should give our support. Number one is a capital gains tax exemption when a person 65 or above is forced to sell a home in which that person lives in order to get into a smaller home, one that he or she can maintain, or an apartment, or a small condominium. There should be a $20,000 capital gains tax exemption. The property appreciation during the past ten years would certainly justify this.

The second is private pension reform. And this is one of the greatest needs. This bill is pending in the Congress in a House and Senate conference committee now. The measure should come out of the committee with essential agreement on three issues: early vesting on a percentage basis and a yearly increase until fully vested at not later than ten years of service; second, pension plan insurance, a kind of FDIC that would review the funds and their investments and keep the plan actuarially sound; and the third is portability, the ability to carry the funds from one company to another on somewhat the same basis as Social Security. An example of non-portability is people who were at retirement age when Studebaker folded and they lost all their pension.

I realize that I have taken a bird-shot approach in this presentation, but we should take a buck-shot approach if we wish to attain definite success. We should select three definite, but not more than five priorities and start work now for the 1975 session. We have been tossing words and ideas about right recklessly here, but the problem is how to convert words and ideas into action to produce desired results. The objectives are not going to come about automatically. There must be conversion of words and ideas into action on our part. And there must be a deep commitment on the part of you and me if we expect any degree of success for a better life for the almost 21 million older Americans in our nation, and specifically the 376,000 in our own state. Are we willing to put reasonable effort into attaining these objectives? Shall we commit ourselves to the task or will we just fasten the seatbelt on our rocking chair? Are we ready to make the commitment? We are not expected to make total committment, just reasonable commitment We are being asked to look forward, upward and out that the aging may have a better life, not inward and backward in our own selfish attitudes. Let us take the information, inspiration and enthusiasm that we receive from this conference where it is needed before it leaks out.

CHAPTER III

POLITICAL RESPONSES OF THE AGED: RESEARCH FINDINGS

--ROBERT H. BINSTOCK

Robert Binstock

I have organized our discussion this afternoon around two major issues. One of them is: Do the aging have power through votes and organized groups, and will they in the future? A second is: What are some of the aging, such as it is, can be applied for getting responses from government?

Now my main point will be that much can be accomplished politically by and for the aging, but not through the false reassurance generated by such typical assertions as: "We've got a terrific number of older voters," or "We have six million older persons in our organization." The challenge is to translate these nostrums, which make us all comfortable, into the capacity to influence public officials and other politicians. Part of what I am going to suggest today is that the so-called "aging vote" means little except as a bluff, and that the millions of members claimed by mass membership organizations provide a little power but not very much for radical redistribution of resources, rules, and regulations to change substantially the conditions faced by the severely disadvantaged aged.

Let's examine the first issue: Do the aging have power through votes or through organized groups?

Now it is clear that in some way or other the aging are able to receive repeated increases in Social Security benefits. When you look at this from the input side you can say, "Hey, that's terrific; we have had Social Security amended 15 times and we have brought the level of benefits way up." But if you look at it from the output side, you would find that a constant proportion of older people, roughly a quarter of the people in this country 65 and over, do not have incomes sufficient to allow them to eat adequately. So even if aging voters and interest groups have had some influence in the passage of Social Security amendments we have to note, at the outset, the distinction between power sufficient to help in the passage of a bill, and power to change substantially the situation of older persons.

What I am suggesting to you, for example, is that if an organization's leader tells you how many times he went in and had meetings with congressmen, shook hand with the President, got a hearing--that is a claim of some kind of power. But it is not necessarily an indication of major power to solve major problems here in the state, or at the national, or at the local level.

If we want to know what the aging can accomplish with votes, we also have to ask: What can votes accomplish in any event? Votes can determine the outcome of an election. Are the outcomes of an election particularly important? Some people feel they are; some feel they are not important at all, that elections make very little difference in the American political system. Some people feel that the only thing that makes a difference in this system is what a small cohesive power elite wants. In fact, Atlanta was the place where one of the original power elite studies, done by Floyd Hunter, indicated just that.

In short, I am suggesting that one's characterization of what is important about the way the American political system works has a lot to do with the value you place on any particular form of political action. My own view is that no sweeping theory accounts for change and response, for action and inaction. Rather, you have to take a piece-by-piece approach, looking at each form of political activity in relation to specific objectives. There are certain things that can be accomplished merely through making a political nuisance of yourself, and certain things that you probably cannot accomplish no matter what you do because the power to control those things is way beyond your resources for exercising influence.

Getting down to specifics, we hear cases stated over and over again for the strength of the aging vote. And the statements rightly point to the significant proportion of persons 65 and over who are eligible to vote and who do turn out and vote. In most national elections the 65 and older proportion of people who actually go to the polls and vote is about 15 percent.

That is a fairly big chunk of the electorate. You can even build it up higher if you want to argue that you should lower the cutoff point to the age of 62 or the age of 60, reflecting earlier retirement ages and an assumption that the spouses of people who are about to retire would identify themselves with the same interests as those who are retired.

On the basis of such assumptions we could build a case that as much as 20 percent of the people who vote in any given national election might be considered older people in some sense--particularly in the sense that they might respond to old-age-based appeals. What of it? Do the aging vote in a bloc? Can they be organized to vote in a bloc that might be decisive in swinging the outcomes of elections?

The answer, from every bit of evidence we have, is no--no more than any one other mass category of citizens. The reasons for this are readily apparent once we stop to think about it. If somebody is going to walk into a voting booth with age as her predominant concern, that concern and identity will have to transcend a multitude of other identities, interests, and self-perceptions she has hed all her life. Her ethnic background, where she grew up, the kind of education she has had, the kind of employment and peer group associations she has had--these are all important identities. If age is among those identities it is most likely to be the weakest. It is the latest and therefore has had the least time to be reinforced. Moreover, what we find in the research that has been done is that most aged persons do not identify as being aged in any event. Again it is not so difficult to figure out why. Not if you see the negative stereotypes that are purveyed in this country about what it means to be aged. You certainly could get the feeling that the media are trying to say that age and deviance are synonyms. Many persons who grow older and become chronically ill will tend to think of themselves, simply, as persons who have a chronic illness that they are trying to adjust to--and not as one of the chronically ill aged. If a person is poor, his primary perception is that he does not have enough money to go out and buy food; the fact that his income has been severely reduced by retirement, and that retirement may have been mandated because of his older age, is of no more than secondary importance.

I could go on with illustrations, but the point I am trying to make to you is this. Those studies that have been done show that most older persons do not strongly identify themselves as aged if, indeed, they do so at all. To the extent that they do, to most of them it is weaker than other identifications they have.

Regardless of whether people identify to some extent as aged of if they do not happen to, the fact is that older persons do not vote in a cohesive bloc. The single most important phenomenon about the votes of aged persons is that they are likely to distribute among candidates and parties, in much the same way they did when those persons were younger. In other words, if 50 percent of the people who came of voting age in 1910 were Democrats then, and 50 percent of them were Republicans, they are most likely to remain similarly divided in their loyalties in 1974. We know that people's attachments to parties, to certain basic issues, tend to stay stable over the life cycle.

Despite this, you will hear people point to specific examples of how the aging swung an election from one candidate to another or to one party from the other. They will even try to convince you with superficial statistics. The older vote for the Republican candidate in 1960 was relatively high. When Goldwater ran in 1964 and the press irresponsibly reported that he was "against" Social Security and accurately reported his opposition to Medicare, the aging vote for the Republican candidate went way down from 1960. On the basis of this, some journalists have argued that votes were swung by old age considerations. For that assertion to have any validity, however, you would have to ask how the young vote and the middle-aged vote went. And if you look, what you find out is that everybody's vote for the Republican candidate dropped very substantially in that election. Barry Goldwater got wiped-out across the board, regardless of race, color, creed, religion, -- and especially regardless of age. So to say anything about the aged vote being significant or swinging over in that election is to be very, very misleading.

Any time someone suggests that the aged vote can swing an election, careful analysis will tell you that it is not the case. On the other hand, for those who want to accomplish something on behalf of the aging, it is a very good suggestion to make. It certainly does not hurt and in many cases it helps, because one of the main sources of political influence in any level of politics is the ability to bluff.

Because of the electoral bluff of a possibly decisive aging vote, politicians at all levels avoid going out of their way to offend the aged. But you notice that there are never stark, central, redistributive proposals for the aging put forward by one candidate to distinguish himself from the other. I heard sombody saying at lunch today that to guarantee an income of $10,000 a year to the aged would be nice but impractical. Well, what is impractical about it? It would probably cost approximately $15 billion and there are plenty of places to find $15 billion in that $300 billion federal budget as it is now. It is not impractical economically, just politically. A politician who favored such a proposal would win some additional votes of aged persons, but not all by any means. And it would certainly cost him a good many votes in other sectors of the electorate, far more than cancelling out any additional aged votes obtained

in this fashion.

If you walked into any senator's office and started talking to him about the aging vote, he would probably be very respectful. But when he and his staff sit down to make campaign plans or decide on legislative votes, they are not going to stick their necks out seriously for the aging vote. What they are going to do is watch what the other senators are doing and make sure they do not get caught too far out of line one way or another. They do not want to lose votes here and there by calling the bluff of an aging vote. Yet they are not going to make something to benefit the aging the central, pivotal theme or proposal of their political appeal.

Organized interest groups based on memberships of millions of aging members make discreet use of the electoral bluff to play a moderate role in the politics of policies related to aging. This morning you heard from Mr. Hughes, Vice-President of NRTA-AARP, and he told you that there are about 6½ million members at the present time. NCSC, the National Council for Senior Citizens, has a membership running into several million. Figures vary on these two organizations from time to time and I must say (from the outside), it is hard to know when double counting is done within and among the membership records of these two organizations. There are local chapter memberships in all sorts of various affiliate programs. But, let us assume they have about 10 million members of one kind or another between them. That is pretty impressive. It means roughly half the older people in the U.S., that is, assuming that dual membership is not involved. (This issue of dual membership count is one that I have never heard anybody address to the head of NCSC and the head of AARP when they are both together on the same platform. "You say 5 million, 6½ million? Is there any chance that some of those are members of both your organizations?" But it is possible that they total 10 million different persons, so let us say it is so.)

Because these organizations symbolically represent millions of older persons, they can get access to politicians. The question is, what does this access accomplish? The politician portrayed as thinking, "Hmmmm, 6 million members, I had better listen to what this person has to say. They are all of voting age and sometimes as high as 80 percent of them turn out to vote. I had better be careful." Well, as I just intimated, careful about what? Those voters are going to turn out, but the best predictors we have indicate they are going to vote the way they have always voted.

You might think it would make a difference if one of these organizations came out and said to their members that Candidate X is a friend of the aging and Candidate Y is an enemy of the aging. Everybody turn out and vote for Candidate X." But that plea would face formidable competition with the loyalties and political orientations older voters have developed over the years. Think how many Democrats in 1948 intended to vote for Dewey because they thought Truman was unsatisfactory in some way or another; when they got into that voting booth, they voted for Truman. It is very hard to transcend voting habit.

If I can digress for a moment from discussing the mass membership organizations, the importance of habit is one of the reasons people say older persons tend to be conservative. They conserve the values, political values, and ideologies they have had all their lives. If you grew up being a Roosevelt New Deal-Liberal, the chances are that now, when you are 78, you are going to have the same outlook on the world. At this point in time (if I may use that badly-overworked phrase) society is likely to regard you as a conservative. Not because you have changed from being liberal to being conservative, but because what is regarded as liberal and conservative has changed over time. This is quite different from the phenomenon so prevalent in the 1950's when the upwardly-mobile young person moved out from the center city as he got promoted in the corporation, got a home in the suburbs, and changed from voting Democratic to Republican; that is something more of a change in attachment, a change in values. Becoming conservative through the passage of time is a different proposition altogether.

Getting back to the organized groups, the point is that even the members and leaders of AARP and NCSC have never directly suggested that they are able to swing votes. What they say is "We have millions of members, and all of them vote." The organizations are discreet enough not to lay their capacity to deliver out on the line, certainly not on the national level, because they know that most national politicians are too sophisticated to believe an aging vote can be delivered. And the organizations also know that if politicians should call the electoral bluff and the vote is not delivered, what influence the aging interest groups do have will sharply decline.

For this reason, the aging organizations do not put forward strong proposals that would substantially change the economic, biomedical, and social status of the aging. They propose and support incremental changes. Another reason why these organizations are not particularly militant lies in the incentives that get people to belong to them. What AARP and NCSC have offered people to become members in sociability, inexpensive drugs, travel plans. Members do not sign up because they are after radical social change. If you go by an NRTA-AARP office, as I did about six weeks ago near St. Petersburg, you will probably see a sign out in neon lights advertising: drugs, insurance, travel. You will not see a sign offering "social change."

I am not being critical of these organizations. What I am saying is that there are understandable reasons why they are not seeking social change. They do not have very powerful resources for social change, and social change is not what brought members to them to begin with. The leaderships of the organizations are trying to interest members more and more in the need for major social change. But they cannot move far beyond the interests of their members without risking losses in their membership bases.

What do these organizations have as resources for power in addition to the electoral bluff? Because of their credentials as symbolic "representatives" of the aging, they can participate in any policy forum that is established to discuss aging. Whether they substantially influence the outcome of deliberations is open to question. They certainly have

some power in their chance to frame issues. That is, they have a podium by the fact that they can get a hearing and have representation at any important gathering on aging. They can state what the issues are, and that is an important political asset.

Think how in the last ten years we have in this country moved from being horrified at the idea that people might get public financial support just because they are human beings. Ten years ago, to suggest that people might get public money simply because they were human beings and needed to eat, would have to be accompanied by an acknowledgement that they were lazy, shiftless, the scum of the earth. In the case of the elderly this did not have to be acknowledged because of the myth that Social Security was an insurance program and actuarially sound. You could say, "Well, those people worked hard all their life and are getting a return on what they put in." So it was not so much of a problem for the aging in terms of getting Social Security income redistribution. But for the rest it was different. Yet in ten years we have moved to the point where the majority of persons in this country are willing to accept, at some level, the fact that people deserve to eat because they are people. That is quite a change. And it is largely due to the fact that some leaders stood up and said, "All human beings need to eat, regardless of whether they do, can, or even want to earn money."

It is not a negligible political power to be in a position to have a ready podium from which to state policy issues and to restate them. What Teddy Roosevelt called the "bully pulpit," available through the Presidency, was one of his more important weapons for exercising political leadership. We have seen what someone like Ralph Nader can do just by stating an issue. We have seen what someone like Rachel Carson accomplished by calling attention to the environment. If you can stand up and frame issues, you define what the game is about, until somebody else stands up and says, "Wait a minute, that isn't the game at all." It is a tremendous advantage if you can get an audience any time you want one, and that is something the mass membership organizations can do.

So I would suggest to you that one of the critical issues for action implications is how substantial the proposals for change that come forth out of those organizations are going to be in the next few years. Anyone can and any politician <u>will</u> stand up and say "We need a 12 percent increase in Social Security." And if you get a bunch of politicians together, they will outbid each other in front of any audience. If the first one says 12, the next will say 14, and if you have six of them you will get it up to 27 percent by the time the last one has spoken.

The question is, will one of those organizations stand up and say "No matter how many times Social Security has been raised, one quarter of the people out there 65 and older are freezing, they do not have anything to eat, they are wearing rags, they cannot get medical service, they do not even have the money to get on a bus to go to a doctor; they need massive income transfers to provide them with a minimally adequate existence." That is something that will be hard for those organizations to do, because one of the key things they have to do is hold onto their membership. Whether those 10 million members will maintain their attachment to those organizations if they come forth with relatively radical

proposals is problematic. Many members might well say, "I didn't know they were going to be saying those crazy things; I joined because I could get this insurance plan and some good travel packages." If there is disonance between what the leadership is saying and what the members came into the organization for, they may leave the organization. That is the risk that the organizational leaderships must face if they are to take on more militant positions to help the aging.

With their power to frame issues, their electoral bluff, their access to politicians, what do these organizations do? Largely, they further middleman interests. That is, like most organizations in American politics, they carry out what Theodore Lowi has called Interest-Group Liberalism, a style of politics in which our government very rarely legislates and administers the specific content of social programs. What it does is authorize some money, give a broad name or series of names to the domain in which that money can be used (for example, Law Enforcement Assistance, or Older Americans, Community Services, or Area Agency Planning), and then sets up rules and procedures through which authorized groups can sit down and bargain over who is going to get what, and what the content of programs will be. The aging membership organizations participate very effectively in this process of interest group conflict and accommodation, carving out their share of middleman programs funded by the government. In making these comments about the organizations I am not singling them out for criticism. We happen to be talking about the politics of aging today. If we were talking about the politics of law enforcement the same things could be said about the organizations involved in that. These are typical patterns of politics and organizations in American society. To say these things about some organizations is to say them about virtually all interest organizations functioning in the American political system.

Aside from these established organizations, what about the potential for power through ad hoc groups? Groups like that started by Maggie Kuhn whom you will be hearing from tomorrow -- the Gray Panthers?

Ad hoc groups can be powerful for specific purposes because all the influence they have is focused on a single issue. Unless you have economic power of the kind sufficient to disrupt the economy, or power to disrupt the social fabric of the community, generalized power is very hard to come by in this political system. For most of us power is available only in the context of specific objectives. It is always important to ask: What are you after? At the local level, what is needed to exercise leverage on a particular proposition is not nearly as great as what is needed to lever politicians to obtain massive redistributive changes. Sometimes just information will provide sufficient leverage.

Sometimes the most seemingly helpless individual has sufficient power because, as I suggested before, almost all of us have the power to make nuisances of ourselves. You start out with no influence. You pick your target and you make yourself a nuisance to that target. Then you have something, the power to stop being a nuisance. And that puts you in a bargaining situation because you may get something for turning off the nuisance. I think we say plenty of examples of that skillfully executed in the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s and late 1950s.

What I am suggesting here, as a transition for moving into a discussion of how to affect policy, is that: In general, the aging vote is no real source of power, especially for affecting sophisticated politicians. Mass-membership organizations, in their present state, are not a source of power for major changes, although they are more powerful than the aging vote because they are in a position to act out an electoral bluff, to gain access to policy discussions, and to frame issues. Moreover, on very specific issues, real power can be manufactured and used effectively if it is focused appropriately on the right targets in policy processes.

What is really important about intervening in policy processes? How do you get to key policy-makers and how do you influence them?

Now I have suggested already that one way to influence someone is to give him information -- to enlighten him about a situation; but I want to follow that up very, very quickly by saying that such cases are rare, indeed. It is very unlikely that someone who is resisting you is resisting you because they are ignorant of the facts. It is usually because they have, in their terms, good reason for resisting.

We all tend to look at politics as irrational, an aberration on reason. A more useful way to look at politics is to see it as having rationalities of its own -- rationalities that conflict with the rationales of the reformers and "problem-solvers." When a politician resists a proposal that seems perfectly rational to the reformer who puts it forward, it is not because the politician is irrational, but because in terms of the rational framework being used by the politician, the reform proposal makes no sense.

Once we are willing to accept this, one of the most important things to recognize for strategic effectiveness is the different types of frameworks used by politicians in their decision-making, and to match up the right framework with the right target. For example, let us take a legislative body, in general, such as the Congress of the United States. It has two houses, with 435 districts in one house and 50 districts in the other house. The lower house, the House of Representatives, is not going to pass a bill that allocates $2 billion into three of those 435 districts, and none to the rest of them. We can all figure out why that would be the case yet it is surprising how often it is forgotten. For instance, take the history of how we got the Model Cities program. There was an original proposal to take all the urban programs we had been trying out in the 1950s and early 60s, and to massively fund them in seven cities in the United States. This was the plan put forth by the task force for the proposed Demonstration Cities program. The critics had been saying urban programs were terrible; the defenders were saying that it was not that the programs were terrible; but they had not been adequately funded and coordinated. "You put in a little piddling money for public housing, a few social services; how can you expect to accomplish anything? You have got to do it on a massive funding level." So the idea behind that program was to fund all these programs massively in seven selected cities, to demonstrate once and for all if the real problem lay in poorly conceived programs or in the inadequate scale of funding.

This was a terrific academic idea. The only problem was, how are you going to get a bill passed in the House of Representatives to massively fund just seven cities when 435 districts are represented? The answer is, you do not. What you get is amendments to provide for more than 100 model cities, with practically every large municipality in the country having a Model Cities Program, none with very much money. So the basic conception of the program was undermined because its very nature ignored the most elemental rationality of group legislative behavior.

We do not have much time for me to run down a lot of different sets of rational frameworks that politicians employ, so what I want to do is select out a particular type of important consideration. Public officials in various positions have aspirations of many different kinds. It is possible to say in some cities, for instance, that people who run for the City Council or the Board of Aldermen are really after nothing more than a little recognition from their neighbors. One such city I know is Manchester, New Hampshire, where the people get paid $200 a year for being an alderman; and people who run for the position are men and women from the working class. They are bus drivers and the like. What they want when they go for a beer in their neighborhood bar is for people to say, not "Here comes old Joe;" it is "Here comes Joe, you know he is an alderman." About all it takes is a little recognition to get Joe to come along with a proposal. In that city, the Mayor, who has very weak formal powers, gets what he wants from the aldermen by handling them like an orchestra leader at the city council meeting. He does not even have to meet with them beforehand. He just says nice things to them when he is running the city council meeting, lets them make motions, and so on, providing small tokens of recognition.

That is a different mode of influence from what is necessary in a city where everybody who runs for city council is aspiring to get into state politics, maybe through the next step of being mayor. That in turn is rather different from the city where most of the people running for city council are trying to build contacts so that their law practice can get off the ground or so their insurance brokerage can flourish. We could go on endlessly. The point to remember, however, is that in each city the framework politicians use to evaluate what you have in mind may be different. The question asked by a politician in looking at your reform proposal for the aging may be, in one city: "If I come out for this, is it the type of issue that can catapult me into favorable statewide attention?" In another city, the politician may ask himself, in relation to the same proposal: "What will my friends think of me if I support this?"

What I am suggesting to you is that until you have some understanding of the politician you want to approach about your reform proposals, until you achieve some focus on what is important to that person, you are not going to get too far with him. Is the mayor trying to run for governor, or is he simply a small town citizen, putting in time because it is his turn to take on the community obligation of being mayor? In either case, there are ways to reach him. Through reason, through selling, through incentives, through constraints, through bluffs, through threats. But the political resource chosen must, to be effective, match the framework with which the politician is operating.

In effect, the power of the aging lies not in their numbers alone; it lies in their determination as individuals to get together, to be smart to be specific about targets, and to make a connection between who they are and what they can do, the change they want, and the politician who is in an official position to make that change. Connect up with something that politician wants or something that person fears. Give him something he needs or threaten to take it away from them. That is the only way. Not by waving about votes. That will get you a hearing, but that is about all it will do. Not by raving about how many of us there are, but rather, what you will do, all 100,000 of you. What you will do is what counts; that is what the politician is listening for.

Finally, will the political power of the aging change in the future? I have suggested already that there is potential for change through the leadership of the mass organizations, in terms of the kinds of issues they frame. I do not think there is much potential for change in the power of the aging vote simply because all generational age cohorts of people are heterogeneous, whether they are in their 20s, 30s, 60s, 70s, or 80s. Whatever the distribution of their tastes, and their preferences and their identity, they are going to stay distributed. So we are unlikely to see the emergence of a cohesive aging bloc vote.

The most important thing to remember politically is that aging does not change people. It may make it harder for them to do things. It may shut them out of some things, because of the way society is organized. It may make them look a little different. But that does not mean aging changes people. It changes their situation. As people, they still have feelings for themselves as individuals. Older persons want respect most of all; they will not submerge themselves into the aging identity, not to the exclusion of other things, not even in preference to most other things. So the key thing in effective political action by the aging lies not in appealing to age interests, but by appealing in terms of specific problems confronted by the people who happen to be aged. The problems -- money, housing, medical care -- is what will bring older people together politically. Not their age.

CHAPTER IV

ACHIEVABLE GOALS FOR OLDER GEORGIANS

--REPORTS FROM DISCUSSION GROUPS

DISCUSSION GROUP REPORTS

Group A.- Yolanda Owens

Our first objective is to create an environment which not only encourages and enhances the involvement of more older Georgians and the identification of issues and problems which affect them, but also actively incorporates them in what we call "real planning" for them. A second objective is to develop meaningful alternatives to institutional care: homemaker service and home health aids which would afford older Georgians viable mechanisms to remain independent. Another is to upgrade the standards of nursing homes to insure that these institutions are providing the best care possible to older Georgians through a working relationship with the Georgia Hospital Association, the Georgia Nursing Home Association and the Department of Human Resources.

In terms of legislation, our first goal is to establish a full committee on aging in the House of Representatives. A second is to eliminate the present earning limitations for older Americans receiving Social Security who are continuing to be a part of our work force. Our fourth is to bring about a protective services bill which would also include an adult abuse clause to protect older persons from abuse by spouses or other persons. Fifth, to launch an investigation of the clause in city charters which prohibits city funds from being used for what is called "charitable programs." Our last objective was to strengthen the existing coalition of all groups and organizations having special interest in older Georgians, to set priorities, establish objectives and to work to accomplish them through legislative action. Thank you.

Group B.- Frank Whittington

We had some difficulty getting down to business. We had conflict over deciding whether we were really trying to enunciate goals in a vacuum, or whether we were trying to come up with ideas which we could see were really workable. For a moment I will leave aside the issue of whether or not these are achievable and just how they are achievable and and come back to that as our last goal. We generally felt that the greatest needs of the elderly in the state of Georgia were in the areas of transportation and housing but we were really unable to come up with some specific suggestions as to how to meet these needs. So with that one little warning, we are not overlooking those as far as knowing exactly what an achievable goal would be in this area, but we will go on to our more specific goals.

The first three were lifted very directly from Mr. Hughes' recommendations yesterday morning and have to do with legislation pending before the legislature of the state of Georgia. The first was to encourage and work for the passage of the constitutional amendment on the November

ballot which is designed to equalize teacher retirement benefits of the four teachers' retirement systems in Georgia which do not come under the state plan. The second, was to work for the establishment of a full committee on aging in both the Georgia House and Senate. The third was the implementation of the Consumer Protection Act which was proposed in the last legislature but which did not become law. The fourth goal, which is not necessarily a legislative goal, is to work for better mental health screening processes in order to insure that older people do not find themselves committed to a state mental hospital or an institution for the mentally ill when that is not really their problem. The suggestion was also made to reinstate a program which had been carried out in years past to identify and transfer those older persons who were in the central state hospital wrongly and find different and better facilities for those people. The fifth goal is to endorse the concept of an updated, comprehensive directory of services, resources, and agencies which pertain to the needs of older Georgians. We recognize the fact that some of this function will definitely be served by the proposed 'tie line' that the Department of Human Resources is just now getting under way. We feel that some sort of directory which people can have in their hands is also an important goal. Sixth, we call on the State Board of Regents or the Legislature, whichever has the direct power to implement his goal, to provide tuition-free access to the state University System on both a credit and non-credit degree and non-degree basis. Seventh, we would like to see an increased state commitment to the training of students and professionals in the field of gerontology, both in formal degree programs, and in the way of in-service training for professionals already working in the field.

Finally, getting back to the issue of implementation and re-emphasizing something Yolanda just said. We are troubled by the lack of any sort of mechanism through which any of these goals which come out of this meeting can readily be implemented. There are different organizations within the state with varying degrees of responsibility and commitment and we just do not see any unified way that people can come under the same organizational umbrella or get hold of these same goals with a unified strategy and do very much good. We played around with the idea of some sort of state-wide coalition and we feel very strongly that there is a need here. I think it is probably obvious to most of us who heard Mr. Hughes and who know anything about NRTA-AARP organizations that they very likely would form a very strong nucleus for any such coalition. They have already done a fantastic amount of research and organizational work in this area. I am certain that they would be a nucleus about which other groups could coalesce. The Georgia Gerontology Society is a ready base of people who have not been that involved in political action or anything like that but I think certainly through the good graces of the Georgia Gerontology Society, members could be notified and could become a cooperating organization. I think there are enough smaller groups in the state who are somehow involved in taking direct action and with the desire to seek to influence legislators or get involved in the political process, not necessarily on the electoral level but on the policy level.

This is a very important point Dr. Binstock made yesterday: that decisions are not always made in the legislature. In fact, one might

say they are rarely made in the legislature when one takes into account the total number of decisions that affect people. These are some of the more important ones, the ones that are closest to you. Ones made by your city councils, by various state boards of commissioners, boards of regents;people like this. While local groups certainly could identify and deal with local issues better, there are certain issues that even local groups need to be made aware of right in their own communities that they are unaware of. I dare say very few people in the Atlanta area were aware before Mr. Hughes mentioned it, that the Atlanta public school retirement system for teachers was totally inadequate and that the 160 retired teachers in the city of Atlanta today were much behind the retired teachers in the rest of the state.

Group C - Frank Bellinetti

Our group took sort of a bird-shot approach to begin with and tossed around various ideas that seemed to be of concern to the group. Those, basically, fell into several areas: one, a concern that income was one of the major needs, and legislation that would make their income more effective in our economy is needed. Another one was related to the concept of the fact of the image of what it means to grow old; what older people are all about. There needs to be more concentrated efforts to build a more positive image, and this would help take care of the legislators' image of older people and make them more aware of what needs to be done.

There was another discussion related to the involvement of local people to provide more support with man-power and financial resources for the ongoing operation of programs; that, where possible, this effort should be made rather than always looking to the federal government for the continued operation. Resources are scarce at the local level, this is true, resources are scarce period, but there are a lot of organizations. One particular one mentioned in the group was the church organizations, and the great potential that lies in that particular part of society providing real support--manpower and financial resources. There were some barriers that were recognized, but here again something should be done.

Going back and trying to focus in on some of these particular topics: Under income, it was felt that the real need was to get a real strong consumer protection bill because this would help protect the limited income of older people. It would also make the money they are spending more effective. Another area where emphasis should be placed is the homestead exemption law which has some weaknesses in it. One of the major ones is the local option aspect. Mr. Hughes mentioned there may be a need to freeze the homestead exemption limit and this sort of thing. Maybe what is needed is to try to strengthen the present law rather than try to go to a larger limit. One area to zero in on would be to remove the local option phrase in there so that it became a mandatory thing throughout the state. That raises the question of what happens to school systems where the major tax base is from older people? This is particularly the case in some of our rural counties where the young people have left and there is a large older population. What is going to happen to those school systems? Mr. Hughes suggested that perhaps the state could work out a subsidizing arrangement to compensate those counties that were severly impacted by the loss of revenue from having

this homestead exemption for older people.

In relation to that discussion, there was a little broader issue, the need for long-range planning. There is a real need to get the state and local government to provide more emphasis on long-range planning rather than just dealing with the present crisis. This is not to say we need to remove the emphasis and to decrease our effort on present needs, but we need to be aware that there may be a shift. It was pointed out in the group that by the year 2000, 25% of the total population will be 65 or older. There will be another 25% in the 27 and below, which means we will have fewer young people entering the labor force to replace those who are being retired. There is probably going to be a stronger force to retain older people in the labor force as we get closer into the 21st century. Here again, the problem may take care of itself because of the characteristics of the population and the fact that people will be healthier and be working longer.

One other area that was mentioned was the image change that is necessary. It was suggested that what is needed is to draft some legislation that would provide for adult education of the older persons themselves and for community education, a real public relations kind of effort and a real effort within the school system. Perhaps what is needed is to have courses in aging as part of the curriculum from the time you enter the school system and throughout the whole education spectrum. There is a need for learning what aging means; learning the skills necessary to cope with later life and to expose younger people to older people. The children who wrote Foxfire had learned that older people had value and had something to say. And one of the things they had learned from these older people was that, when the person had experienced all that they had experienced in their 70 or 80 years, then they had been able to sift out a lot of the nonessentials in life. This helped these young people to get a bearing on where they needed to go in their own lives. I think there is a great value in the concept of having younger people and older people come together in a sharing experience. And I think a good place for this would be in the educational system. One person suggested that, just as it is mandatory that all students entering the University of Georgia have Georgia history, perhaps there should be a requirement to have courses in gerontology and field experience working with older people. Perhaps this is one thing that is needed to have implemented in the educational system.

I think the main points in trying to zero in on what needs to be done in the next year is in the area of income as it relates to the homestead exemption to strengthen the present law; there needs to be a strong Consumer Protection Law; and one other area I almost left out is that we definitely need to work toward having full committees on aging in both Houses of the Georgia General Assembly.

Hugh Gaston

In keeping with some of the things Frank mentioned, I think you would like to know that your Georgia Department of Human Resources this year adopted a policy which allows an employee in the Department to

continue to be employed, if that person wants to and if the appointing authority recommends it, to age 75. I think this is unique in state government. As you know, there are some 23,000 employees in this large Department of Human Resources, about 2/3 of the employees in state government. I think that with the fact that the Office of Aging is based in this department, it was fitting and proper for this first move to come from the Department of Human Resources.

Group D.- Susan Daugherty

Defining achievable goals is no easy task, and we sometimes get diverted when this is the assigned task. The group we were with did deal with some concerns, although we did not really define achievable goals. But this conference on aging, as any other like it, gives opportunities to explore, to ask questions, to learn, to pick up on little things that are most urgent. And we have all arrived here with our own concerns, and some of the concerns expressed by Group D are indicative of the need for coordinated effort set forth in Title III of the Older Americans Act. Many persons at the service-giving level, let alone the service need level, lack of information regarding resources available. It was difficult to find an issue needing legislation while the overwhelming daily need is to put people in touch with services already available.

This group expressed interest in local needs, coordination, identifying resources and advertising them. Several in the group felt this need for information, either because they are fairly new to the field or they are on the fringe of information. There is a need to understand the purpose and breadth of current legislation--who is to be reached by this legislation and why, and how to build locally on this and expand services. The cry continues to know current resources in order to coordinate volunteer services of agencies, organizations and citizens. There is a need to work closely together to build bridges, to be willing to explore how older people themselves can become involved in the volunteer effort of giving as well as receiving. And as a source of information, the tie-line was discussed. The local need for service providers to work even more closely together is the real problem.

A third issue is to expand the services available at some State Patrol offices, providing I.D. cards for non-drivers. This need for identification for check cashing and so forth is a recurring one, not only among those 60 and over who are not driving but for other non-drivers.

Some of the issues revolving around SSI were discussed. Someone commented on the fact that there now exists a bill which would change things in that SSI recipients would not be automatically eligible for food stamps. So the question is, other than making it known to the Senate or to senators, how can this conference respond to this political reality? Then there was an after-group discussion that revolved around an increased homestead exemption and reduced property tax for persons 60 and over, but the wording of a goal was not achieved. Perhaps this

conference has put a flashlight in our hands and we can step out into the dark and better define and deal with feasible goals.

Group E.- Bill Parker

Some of our priorities, are not necessarily legislative or political in the strict sense of the word, because some of the problems, quite frankly, are with the bureacracy with which we have to deal when we talk about the problems of aging. Let me go through a few of the items here. There was an expressed need for a better clearinghouse for information to the local communities on what is available in the way of funding programs in aging, and also what is abailable to the aging or aged consumer. We need a better way for agencies to have knowledge of the availability of funds for direct programming at the local level. It was mentioned as a priority that legislation should be pushed to stop the action whereby a raise in Social Security can mean an automatic decrease in income from other sources. Sometimes it also means an automatic increase in the outgo of one's income, such as raising the rent in public housing projects.

One area that the group touched on, by the way, is making sure that the powers that be in the Administration on Aging and the Social Security Administration--all political and nonpolitical entities that speak for and with the problems of older adults--be represented more fully in a conference such as this.

The old bugaboo transportation come up--you are never going to get away from it, as it is here with us and it is going to be with us for a long time. It is high time we started moving more directly to get some action in the area of transportation. One suggestion was to contact the authorities in the field of transportation. Here are the problems that older adults face in our community. "You should develop within our local community a system to meet these needs, because you are the expert in moving people about." Those of us who work and have worked in programs realize we run transportation systems quite often and we do not know a hill of beans about running transportation systems. That is a fact of life. Here we go playing Mr. Busdriver.

Another area of concern is more opportunities for local input of people throughout the state. People in our group are feeling left out of the process whereby they get heard and they were asking too, "So we identify some priorities, so we identify some goals; where is it going to go, where is it going to take us?" And we did not struggle with that because there were people in the group who said, "I have got to be heard. I want people to hear that there are priorities in my area that nobody is listening to." The point here is that people feel left out at the local level and they are looking either to society or to ongoing groups at the state level to meet their priority needs.

A further area needing attention was in the idea of coordination--the growing together of the problems of older adults with the problems that I face in my life. The group touched on that by saying that we need to look at the possibility of getting together with the aged, the

blind, the poor and forming a coalition. This would not simply be a coalition of aging groups and older adults, but a coalition across the board. The problems that older adults face are no different in some respects than the ones I face each and every day. The strength in numbers may well be worth the effort of organizing at a much broader level.

I was very pleased to hear Frank talk about the need for free tuition. Our group was very concerned about the fact that older adults should be allowed free access to state educational institutions. Several were willing to settle for just simply the ability to audit credit or noncredit classes on a no-fee basis. I am not willing to settle for that. I would be willing to settle for free tuition as a starting point for older adults, but I think it is going to have to go further than that. Education of myself and others like me for the fact that a few years from now I will no longer be in the work force is needed. What am I going to do at that point? There is a need in the whole educational process for people to begin at a very early age to look at their whole life's plan and look at their own creativity as it may be used at the age of 20, as it may be used at the age of 35 and again as it may be used at the ages of 55, 60, or 90.

The last suggestion from our group was this: The group said that the State Office of Aging should be playing a more active role in advocating for the Georgians; in getting the word to legislators as to what the needs are in the state of Georgia, and in affecting legislation for older Georgians. There is a feeling there that the State Office has not been doing enough in this area. And there was a charge put to the State Office of Aging to indeed advocate for the needs of older Georgians in a more direct manner.

CHAPTER V

THE SENIOR CENTER AND THE CITY OF ATLANTA, A PANEL PRESENTATION

--AL HORVATH, MODERATOR

Al Horvath, Moderator
--A panel on the senior center.

Before we get into the major thrust of this session, the multi-purpose senior citizen service and training center as a focal point for service in the community, we want to talk about some goals that have already been reached, some notable accomplishments that have already been achieved. I have asked four folks to relate to us very briefly just what has happened, what has been the method used to interest local elected officials in the affairs of older people. What was their response, what did they do. We will begin with Rockdale County; Mrs. Olivia Haydale is with the Community Action Agency there in Rockdale County. She will relate to us what has happened and some of the successes they have had.

Olivia Haydale

We in Rockdale County have, for a good many years, been interested in the needs of the elderly. For years we had no mechanism, no opportunity to do anything about it. But back in 1968, our EOA office there in Conyers decided to do something for the elderly. We did not have any specific program to start with, so we started by organizing the residents in the Senior Citizens Clubs. This gave them an opportunity to voice their needs and their concerns, and from that we were gradually able to identify certain things in which we could become involved. From that we went to our Senior Activities Program in developing a Senior Citizens Center. We had very limited funds with which to work, but we were able to start a recreation program. This mainly included classes in ceramics, sewing, and different crafts. We were only able to start this program through the help of the Conyers Housing Authority. They gave us the use of a community building, furnishing it rent-free with all utilities furnished. They continue to do this and without this aid we would not be able to operate this program.

Last year we began hearing about the nutrition program for the elderly and decided to do something about that. And now we have our nutrition program for the elderly which involves around an average of about 120 people who come in five days a week for a hot meal at noontime. At the present we are averaging serving 54 meals a day. Actually, we hope to increase that number, maybe on a temporary basis. Again, the Conyers Housing Authority came to our rescue. They have given us a community building, rent-free with all utilities furnished. We have limited funds with which to operate, and we are still optimistic, still plan to expand this program. We are looking forward to having these two programs, our recreation program and our hot meals program, housed in one building. But this means that we would have to come up with funds from some resource to enlarge one of the community buildings and create more services through this resource. The total community has been involved in this project. It was not just a few people. We have involved many types of volunteers from all walks of life, from all of the public and private agencies, from the local government, and from the city and county. We still plan to give the local government a better opportunity

of helping the elderly by becoming directly involved in furnishing funds at the local level.

It has been very gratifying for everyone who has become involved in this program in any way. We get all sorts of comments from the volunteers who are involved and from the participants in the program. We feel like this is really one of the best programs that has ever been started in Rockdale County. Although, at the present time we are only on just the beginning stage. Thank you.

Al Horvath

I have asked Terry Allen as one of those four people to come by. He is Director of Social Services for the Atlanta Model Cities program, and is a person with whom I have worked very closely. He will comment on Fulton County.

Terry Allen

Thank you, Al. The project in Fulton County is funded by a combination of county funds and Title XVI, Social Security Act funds, and operates in the model neighborhood area. That is the funding base for it. But I will show you how the political process got us that far. Many of you may not know that we have in Atlanta what is called a Plan of Improvement, passed in 1952 by the General Assembly and adopted by the City Council, and by the Fulton County Commission. It divided how the two governments would assume many of what we call the hard-ware kind of activities: streets, road, fire, police, etc. The county was to assume basically the social services in the administration of welfare program, services to aged, services to children, basically those we know as soft-ware programs. Over those years since 1952, we have found that the parties really did not look at that partnership. That was what it was called--A Partnership for Progress. In looking at that partnership, we felt and still feel that Fulton County did not do the kind of programing that we thought necessary to provide adequate services to the citizens, including those above age 65.

In 1966, with the creation of the Model Cities Program, and subsequently the development of the program in Atlanta, our problem analysis and decision analysis indicated to us that a very large percentage of the persons living in our community were above 65 and that some program should be developed to address them. We addressed several problems initially in 1969 to deal with that situation. Two or three of those I will address now and try to show you how the city did get involved. One was the whole area of day care. We wanted to demonstrate beyond a shadow of a doubt that senior citizens could be involved in child care services in a meaningful way, and that they could make some money and could provide a valuable service that was needed by the community. For the last three years, and to the present time, we have maintained that as one of our primary goals in establishing a massive child care program that involved senior citizens as child care workers. We have, at this point now, agreed with the Board and the executive of the Senior Citizen Services that we have adequately demonstrated this activity.

Now what we have done is to involve the city through one of its programs where neither the city nor the county would make the adequate move in terms of providing the services. We have done it through a federal program, we have demonstrated it and now we have spun that program off or institutionalized that program both in the city, because the city accepts that persons above 65 can be employed in a meaningful way in child care services. Also now, a part of the Plan of Improvement got the county to provide a portion of the local match for the continuation of this program, because it demonstrated that senior citizens can in fact be involved.

Another program we initiated there is one we called Homemaker Services, which was operated by the County. Again, if the County officials are here, you will just have to hear the truth. What we had to do, we had to force the County to say this is its responsibility. If it is your responsibility, we will give you the money to do it. We gave the county the money to do it, the county did it for three years, and last year at the end of our funding the program our evaluations showed them over and over again what in fact this type of program would do. And, as of January 1, 1974, the County of Fulton did pick up and provide the local match for our Homemaker Service project.

Another project that we felt very strongly about was a Senior Citizen day care service, which we call a senior citizen personal services project. It was to provide all of the day care kinds of things for senior citizens, to keep older people from being prematurely institutionalized. We provide a setting in one of the housing projects to provide this service to our senior citizens. We also felt that the County would not respond appropriately to this situation. The politics of it got so close in terms of funding the program that the County said to the City, "Look, we will fund half and half, we will give 50% and you give 50%." I think Al and I began to negotiate with the County just in terms of initial discussions and proposals in August of that year. And we kind of sat down with the County Manager and said, "Sir, here is something we feel is valuable, something we feel is needed, something we demonstrated beyond a shadow of a doubt." And, at the same time, we had our constituents ready behind us to say the same kinds of things. It just so happened that the County felt, I suspect, a real need to provide the kind of services we were talking about. So what we felt we have done through Model Cities, and we will give the City full credit for this too, is that we have institutionalized in this community three programs for the elderly that we feel are very, very necessary in terms of providing some minimal level of services at this time.

What we are also interested in doing, and I want to reassure Al of this, is that as the City moves into what we now know as the Department of Community Development and Human Resources, that again we will be focusing in on these same kinds of problems. Our initial position was to establish and demonstrate the need to such as extent that it can be expanded to include the total community--both Fulton and DeKalb Counties and the metropolitan community. So, our strategy at this point is to move toward an expansion of these programs. That is, expansion of day care services to include senior citizens as workers, expansion of Homemaker Services Program which provides services for persons who are in the home, and to expand the number of day care centers for senior citizens.

One last point. Another part of the strategy was, after the City of Atlanta gave responsibility for planning to the Atlanta Regional Commission, what we then had to do was look at how to work with it. So what we did was say, "Okay, if you guys are going to have your centers all around the city, let's construct these centers so as to be able to add on staff in time to come up with a full day care center." The ARC was saying, we can only do the nutrition part of it because that is the only money available. And we said, "Okay, if you are going to have a nutrition program, let's build a director in first and as time passes we can find more money. We can add to the social work capability."

So, what we did as a part of the strategy was to build a base on which you can build a more comprehensive program. Now we have some seven or eight nutrition centers around the city that sooner or later will be able to develop into full day care centers. What we will be able to do then, in terms of the cost on that, is to involve the churches at various levels in negotiations in programming to assume some of the responsibility for space, cooking, and so on. We have a strategy designed to meet the total needs of senior citizens in time. Of course, keep in mind that if you approach it from the standpoint that we are going to do everything overnight, you are almost going to lose your battle. What you have to do is say, in 1975 we would like to expand our program to include two more centers or one more center, or negotiate it out. What we are going to do is on a priority basis establish with the City Council, then the Mayor, activities on a step by step basis until we reach that capacity which we feel is adequate to serve the community. That is the strategy we are employing at this time.

Now, how do you get to that is the crucial question. You must really identify what your problems are, make them very clear. Politicians listen to problems, to what I call problem analysis, you must define the problem very clearly to a politician. You have got to determine on a very prioritized basis what kind of programs you are going for this year, on a short term basis, and also on a long term basis in term of what you hope to do, say, in ten years. So, the problem analysis is very clear in terms of long and short range objectives.

The other thing is the decision analysis, decisions that you feel you need to make in order to influence the political process. Again, the political process is influenced by people. People are the folks who vote. And you understand that this becomes very, very clear as you move in the political arena. Another thing we found to be very important was that of the environment. When I say environment, I do not mean the center, or what surrounds the center, the trees, the grass or whatever. I mean those forces that come to play on senior citizens in this community. The politicians, even if the businessman happens to be a trillionaire, realize that he only has one vote. But in terms of the influence of money and how money flows in this community, that person has a great deal of influence. And the politician is much more likely to respond to the number of persons who may in fact vote or not vote for him. Two things about politicians: they will not vote against children and they will not vote against old people. That represents something significant in how the political process responds to the problems of communities. Thank you.

Al Horvath

Cheryll Schramm directs a multi-service program in Cobb County. She is with the Marietta Housing Authority. Her program has tremendous support and government assistance: Title VII funds, Title III funds, Title XVI funds, and a lot of local funds. It is a great program.

Cheryll Schramm

About two years ago, Cobb County did not have, as far as I know, any specialized services for the elderly. We did not have EOA, we did not have Model Cities, so we really had to start from scratch. In the summer of 1973, Title XVI funds became available. They were available for about two months and we lost them again. Then starting January, 1973, we picked them up again.

First of all, I will run through the services we provide and then tell you how we fund them. We have approximately seven services right now. First and probably one of our biggest components is transportation. We have six vans, and all are radio equipped. They take people to and from the doctor, the drug store, shopping, etc. We served over 7,000 people last year just in transportation alone. Cobb County is fairly spread out, it is urban and rural and we found transportation was one of the biggest needs.

Second is chore service. We have ten home visitors, all but one of whom is over 65 years of age, and a lot of them work part time. They do house cleaning, personal care, and they served over 2000 persons last year just in chore service.

We have four senior citizen centers, two in Marietta, one in Acworth, and one in Austell. We consider them multipurpose centers. We provide recreation, educational and cultural activities, outreach, information and referral, transportation and escort services at all these centers. That includes 160 meals a day, and I would say that about 140 of these meals have to be transported daily. Some of our vans transport at least 50 people a day. The nutrition service is another big component and we are averaging about 160 meals a day and we have to hold there because that is how many meals Cobb County was allocated in relationship to the number of senior citizens we have.

We have outreach services, and we sponsor the Senior Citizens Council of Cobb County, which is made up of 25 representatives from various clubs throughout the County. They meet once a month, and exchange information as well as having a political thrust. They just elected a new board of directors and one of the people is one of the Commissioners of the County. So, we feel that this will be advantageous, also I am not sure about the other counties as far as one agency administering all the services to the elderly, but I feel this has been an advantage to us. We only serve people 60 and over, and so then we can become very specialized. As I said, we lost our Title XVI money within three months. Now Title XVI, as you know, is used with people who are recipients of SSI, current and potential recipients, which was very limiting. So we went to

Cobb County for Revenue Sharing and we said, "We want to provide transportation, chore service and all these services to everybody who needs it." Cobb County gave us over $30,000 of Revenue Sharing funds, therefore allowing us to serve anybody 65 or older. If we had not had Revenue Sharing we would have been limited by Title XVI and we just could not have done it, because there are just too many people that are just on the borderline. What happened, though, was that Title XVI and Revenue Sharing came back in January 1973, but we were without funds for two months. So, the United Presbyterian Church carried us for one month and the Lutheran Church of Minnesota carried us for the second month. So, support came in from all over--you just have to hustle a little bit.

Presently, we receive money from Title XVI to operate transportation, chore service, and the nutrition service. We receive Title VII and Title III from the Atlanta Regional Commission through the Office of Aging. And we receive Revenue Sharing and public money. About $33,000 is Revenue Sharing money, but we had to get at least $13,000 in public money for matching. We also have a lot of community support. The recreation departments and the extension service provide local support. The entire program is sponsored by the Marietta Housing Authority. The Marietta Housing Authority only operates in Marietta but they picked up the program for the entire County. We have about five sources of cash money and about 13 sources of certified money, including my salary. The Housing Authority pays my salary and then loans me out for 85% of my time and then they can match 85% of my salary.

To give you an idea of where we want to go, the Cobb County Lions Club has contacted us and they are presently starting a drive for senior citizen discount cards in Cobb County. We are going to use the Senior Citizen centers to administer these discount cards. People would come, they would get a card that would last a year and we hope to have the larger stores honor it. Right now, the Chamber of Commerce and the Cobb County Alliance Club are working as a team and we would expect that this will be a reality within a couple of months. We are also approaching the newspapers and having them run a column at least weekly, but hopefully daily, saying what is going on with senior citizens. We feel that this would be advantageous so people could plan for retirement and then know what is available. We also hope to approach the County sometime in the summer to encourage them to start an Office of Aging on their own; this would not conflict with any of the other state organizations or local. This would be somebody on the county level to be aware of what is going on and to help us coordinate it. The more services that come into the County, if they come under one group, it is easier for people to know what is available and to utilize them. So, hopefully, as day care money comes available and RSVP becomes a more localized, community resident program, we hope to absorb all of these and become a specialized service just for the elderly.

Al Horvath

I would now like to introduce Charles Grant. He is the Assistant Director of the Community Action Agency for Clayton County.

Charles Grant

Some of the larger programs take a longer time to explain than some of the smaller programs. Clayton County is a small County and it does not take very long to explain about Clayton County. We got into the senior citizens business back in 1967 with some tremendous assistance from Mr. Al Horvath, also Miss Kay Jernigan. And we have been able to identify a lot of the needs that our senior citizens have. During that time we have had some very exciting things happen with us and also during that time we have had some very excellent and dedicated people working with the program. The key to our program has been visibility in being able to keep our program before the community. We have had a tremendous amount of publicity focused on our program and I think that through this media were able to convey to our county commissioners the need we have for them to give us local support.

We, too, have many of the programs that you have already heard discussed. We have a nutrition program where we are serving an average of 60 people a day. We have had in operation since 1967 a multipurpose center and we try to be very comprehensive in meeting the needs of the elderly in our County. The major point that I want to make, however, is the response we receive from our county commissioners and our local municipal authorities. Now we have had some very conservative reaction in the initial stages of the program development. But there has been a change about in the county since we have been in operation. Our local municipal governments are now becoming aware of the program and how it is meeting their needs; and they do come around and inspect the programs and become involved. They become involved in the policy-making bodies and they make a firm commitment. They advocate when they are in County Commissioner's meetings and also in municipal meetings. We have been able to make our match for our programs each time we have been called upon. I was particularly thrilled when Ms. Bartle and Mr. Horvath were helping us pull together our nutrition program. We did not know whether or not we were going to be able to pull our match locally. But we were able to do that through our County Commissioners and we do have a very dynamic executive director that I feel sometimes our local officals are afraid to say no to. She is half Indian and consequently sometimes she gets her tomahawk out in some of the public meetings. So I think we have a good thing going there. They would rather deal with me in a more milder way than to face Wilma Shelnutt.

Al Horvath

Thanks very much. Several things I wanted to say at this point, moving into the session on multipurpose centers as a focal point for services. Leading up to it, some definitions and this sort of thing which I am going to omit. We do have a slide presentation that will kind of give us a feel of what we are talking about. We are not talking about exactly what you are going to see for Atlanta, but I think it will give us a little bit of feel, especially for some of you who have not been exposed to a multipurpose center operation. You will get a better feel than you presently have for this type of service. And then we will proceed to three persons who will then describe to us how we might implement something like this with many additional significant demensions in Atlanta.

(At this time the slide presentation was made.)

Sophia Deutschberger, who has been a long-time worker in this field, goes back 19 years to one of the finest senior center types of programs in the country up in Nashville, and has picked up much experience there and in Athens, Georgia, is our next speaker.

Sophia Deutschberger

First, let me say that every center that is established is not necessarily a multi-functional or multipurpose center. They are partly that, but it depends a great deal on the purpose, how it is set up and who does it as to what is included in the center idea. We have come a long way, baby, and I really mean it. We have been fighting for many of these things for 25 or 30 years. Some of them are beginning to become a reality. I think that the interest that this group here today shows in some of the problems is tremendous. I am very glad that you are all here and interested and I hope some of the goals we talked about are going to be met.

The one thing I would like to say about a multi-functional center is that it is applicable to rural communities. This is not something that only can be done in cities as large as Atlanta, or Athens, or any of the other cities in Georgia. The primary purpose behind these centers is to act as a central source for activities for older people. It is not a specialist kind of thing. All people can be interested, and in Nashville we had to finally set a limit at 55; the members did this themselves because the program was gaining such momentum that we had younger people coming in and we had to limit activities because of that. Everybody who fits into that age group can benefit from this kind of program. Whether you are used to a lot of money or used to a little bit, whatever your cultural background; that other things have happened to you, a loss of job, a loss of standing in the community, brings a feeling of togetherness with these people. As somebody has said, they get down to the hard nitty-gritty things of life and a lot of the incidentals get washed out. They know what they want, they know what they can get and they take advantage of it.

The main factor in a multi-purpose center in a small town or a small community or county is that it can centralize administration. And today with funding the way it is this is very important. I want to emphasize right now that in order to do an adequate job, you must have a person at the head of it who is trained for this particular job, who can choose staff who meet the needs of that particular area. We have lost a lot of time in trying to use well-meaning people with some skill but who lack the overall perspective that this job needs. I am pushing very hard on that because I think this would save an awful lot of time and effort in our counties if we get adequate people to run the centers. The one in Nashville has a very small staff, and I think they now have 3,000 or 4,000 members. The executive is a well-trained, experienced person. But the people who really do the kind of work in the center that needs to be done are the members. This was true from the very beginning. We had only been in operation a short time when a members' council was set up. So that the membership did the planning, they do an awful lot of the operating, they

conduct their own classes. They reach out into the community, they do public relations; it is their center because they are involved.

The main thing I think we need to remember in Georgia is there are large distances between one settlement and another, that money is scarce and that we have to utilize what we have to get the most from it. If there can be a centralized spot, and it does not have to be the biggest city, then they can serve as the resource for a surrounding area which can be large or small depending on transportation. This is working for some of the meal programs and I think it can be worked out here. I think we have heard some very good ways of how to get your local people involved. The central spot can be a large building or a small building; you should provide some services there, and I will go into those in a minute. But it can also serve as a resource for smaller groups within the community. In Nashville, we started with a central spot which was very small with a very small staff. And as that developed, there also developed a number of satellites, we just called them branches in the old days. They have their own program depending on their particular needs. Some of them met once a week, some met two or three times a week. All the resources of the central offices were available to them, including health care, the district nurse, speakers, other members of the central office who were members, not staff, who had something to contribute. At periodic times the branch people came into the central building so that they too felt a part of it. They had a representative on the council and some of the decisions made there affected not only the people at the central center, but also all the ones out in the branches. This could be done here if a county set up a center and then worked through the other smaller places where there were enough people to be effective.

The kinds of things that can be done in a multi-purpose center include those things which are individual, those which are group and those which relate to the community. I can read off a list of things just to give you some kind of idea what can be done. You can have your social services for individuals who have specific problems. You could have information and referral. You could have transportation, you could have an employment committee. There could be many health projects, depending on the need of that particular spot, much of it preventive, health screening can be done by the public health department. Community services would be not only the community contributing to the center, but the center people contributing to the community. And there are a great many people who can work out in the community if they were given some kind of stimulation from somebody, regardless of who it is.

One of the groups I worked with in Nashville was a very limited group, they were handicapped, they called themselves the decrepit group because that is the way they felt. When we first met, the only things they talked about were shrouds, believe it or not, what they were going to be buried in and where. And over a period of time, they grew, in spite of their limitations, and became very active. They did not move around but they made things. They made any number of quilts and lap robes which they gave to poor people. And by poor people, they meant those people who did not come to the center. It was an extremely important to us to see these people move out of this kind of depth into something which meant so much to them, because they were again being useful and contributing to other people. That part of the program, I think, we developed fully.

The center can become, because it is administratively feasible, a center for receiving funds for all kinds of programs, and funding, as everybody has said here today, is very important. But the foster grandparent program certainly can become a part of this. The meals programs and the day care fits right in. The meals-on-wheels and telephone reassurance can be done by the members themselves. Transportation certainly is a big item. Plus receiving and making available all the other social work services that are in that particular area, like Family and Children Services, Social Security and employment; these are all very important. It can be a drop-in spot where people come when they want to when they feel able to. We had a number of people in Nashville who had their schedules made out so they would come to the center on one day and stay home and rest on the next so they would get a variety of experiences but did not wear themselves out.

The other thing I would like to advocate is we drop the word "Senior Citizen." We become so familiar with it that we use it. But if you talk with people in the older age groups, you will find they do not like it. They do not like being called Golden Agers, Silver Hairs, and all the things which really typify somebody who is walking around with their cane and can not think and cannot do anything. I do not have any solution, but I like "Older Adults" better. Hopefully, somebody will come up with a title that is not degrading but gives the kind of emphasis to being older, wiser, and really knowing something about what is going on. Maybe one of you young people can come up with some kind of idea on that.

I think if we can use a multi-functional center, we can demonstrate to the community and to the powers that be that it can be done on a smaller budget maybe than some agencies have been using now, but that they get a full share of their money's worth and there is not the so-called waste that has been going on. By really centralizing activities, by using resources that are there, by developing resources, I think we can fit into the funding that is there. But we are going to have to sell the idea. And in order to sell it, we have got to believe in it ourselves. Thank you.

Al Horvath

Dr. Payne is going to try to relate to us briefly ways that we might tie the multipurpose service center focal point into a university system.

Barbara Payne

Dream a dream about what might happen. I have learned in the last year that agencies, state and local agencies in this community, are anxious to get together and do something new. If they back you and support you, they become your good friends and a lot of things can happen when you have a network of people like that. We would have never had a degree program at Georgia State without funding if it had not been for the State Office, for Jim Thorson at the University, and so on. This kind of learning, of what we could do when we got together, helped us determine that whether we had funding or not we would try. We did it and we had a great year.

Now let us dream something bigger than we have had this year. My biggest dream is that we have here in Georgia a degree program that is not centered in any one school but is System-wide. That is my biggest dream. And one of the ways to go about developing this would be through a center in Atlanta, because of the numbers and centrality, not because we are better or greater than anybody. It is a good place to be where agency people can get together quicker. This does not mean to exclude any other part of the system, but would be a place to coordinate it. We are the only school to offer a master's degree program specifically in aging, and we are going on to start the Ph.D. program in the fall. So, we are ready academically to begin to be the cradle in which some of this can take place. Cooperative work with the University of Georgia this year has assured me that this does not have to be a Georgia State affair at all. It can be a University System-wide activity.

We can have a multi-purpose senior center that is different from these you saw on the board, but which includes some of the same elements. Let me suggest what I mean. We need a university-based center that could provide for us some of the things that are already going on, like our Quality of Life seminars. But is a center which not only older persons come to, but one where college students come. By being located on campus, we can involve those who are being trained, both younger and older people, who provide services for the older people. They will meet and mingle, not just older people, but older and younger people in the center. And we could have there these specialized services and referral. This would be a place for training people who are going to run centers and special programs in other places, for credit or non-credit kinds of education. It would bring together all the resources of a University to bear on such centers, things like consumer education, counseling, and special types of programs. Let us dream a bigger dream.

CHAPTER VI

THE REVOLUTION OF THE ELDERS

--MARGARET E. KUHN

MARGARET KUHN

I am honored and excited and touched to be here and I salute all of you, my peers who are survivors like I am of the vicissitudes of a modern, technological age that is sick. We are reasonably healthy and we are here: and I salute the young advocates who are all around us and who have new roles, as we have, to be the healers of a sick society, if indeed the society can be healed.

A friend of mine, Cameron Hall, who is 69 years old, my age, describes three stages of personhood. He used to say mankind and we worked on him a little bit and now he says personhood. He says there is childhood, and everybody knows what childhood is; how children are supposed to behave and how they are programmed. There is debate about that. And then there is adulthood and there is a big debate as to when adulthood begins. Is it when one has a driver's license, when he is allowed to take a drink, when one votes, when one is drafted and allowed to be killed in Indochina; when adulthood does begin is a big debate. And there is an equally big debate as to when it ends, when we become wrinkled babies, candidates for second childhood, to be just sent out to play. There is that third age which Cameron describes very distinctly, and you know that you are in that age when people begin to say, "Maggie, how well you look!", "You look marvelous, Maggie!" As if we are some kind of freak that it is possible to be old and well and reasonably well put together and functioning. Because I am small, people often look at me like a toy, you know, that continues to wind up and still keeps running. Again, a freak. Now, I am exaggerating this, but you all know what I mean.

I feel we can all say things to each other because we are advocates of each other. At a group like this, this historic conference, we must level with each other. Today I would like to talk first of all about the sickness of our society. I believe it is sick. We were talking over lunch as to how sick it was and whether it indeed could be healed; whether certain kinds of technological sophistications and our preoccupation and intense idolatry of profits and productivity will plunge us into some kind of irreversible human condition from which there is no turning back. Now, I happen to believe that there are signs of healing and hope and renewal and just tiny, tiny new beginnings that have the possibility of turning this society around and healing it of its sickness.

Let us look for a moment at the symptomatology. Much of the work in today's world is meaningless; absolutely contraproductive in terms of human fulfillment and personhood. People are on the assembly line day after day or engaged in endless shuffling of bureacratic papers, only for the paycheck. And there is fierce competition for the paycheck, even among the professionals, who are fighting desperately for their own survival, the survival of their agencies, and the meager crumbs that fall from an affluent table to what they propose to do. Work is meaningless for millions.

Our society is sick in terms of the whole health delivery system. The healers have become the dealers. The doctors fought in the 50s against what they thought was socialized medicine, the use of the Social Security mechanism to provide for some kind of health delivery system, are now getting fat and rich from the same system that they tried to prevent. I say this, speaking in hyperbole, knowing that there are dedicated doctors, and there are dedicated medical students who are trying very hard to fight the system. But the system itself is very sick. I had the privilege recently to speak to the freshman students and many of the faculty at the very powerful medical center at the University of Kansas--one of the great ones in the country. 12 million dollars is being expended there for a new science center, and some 60 million is being expended for a new out-patient department. Enormous power, enormous expertise, enormous competence and enormous technology is centered there. When you fly over Kansas and Missouri and see the scattered villages, you recognize that the geography and the lack of mass transportation will prevent, by public policy, the people who really need this system the most, from getting to it. People who are forgotten, hidden away in rural poverty, are deprived of that. There is no judgement in the Kansas University center about the money they are spending and the compounding of the non-delivery system of health services that system represents. And the medical center at Kansas University is just one of hundreds. So our medical system is sick.

The welfare system is also sick. Because of the fact that there are so many elderly, poor or near poor, we are rapidly cementing into a completely ossified society a permanent poverty class, by public policy and by corporation policy, by corporate irresponsibility.

The whole arbitrary, compulsive retirement system that has infected even academia is another sign of sickness. No matter how much you know or how many years you have worked and demonstrated your faithfulness, and your skill, the magic age which we got from Bismark is 65, and out to grass. Maybe I ought to say pasture--it is a little more acceptable. But it may be grass, it just could be.

There are many things that you and I know about our sick society. It seems to be counterproductive for the people who are attempting to heal people, and whose agenda is person-centered, to try to accommodate those people who live in a sick society without raising their voices and human energies to the healing and directing of social change in the society. Most of the things that have been attempted to ameliorate the condition of old people are service centered, service oriented. The goals are to serve. Now, I am not denying that we need services. We do. But the services have to be redirected, rethought. And some of the energies of the people delivering services ought to be directed to the root causes of the agony, the suffering, the tragedy, the human waste that enable the services to come down the pike. It is not easy to get people to act. The services in many, many instances increase and compound powerlessness and perpetuate our apathy and our indifference and the great pressure to sign ourselves out. To put ourselves in those glorified playpens and just play and forget.

Now, this is not what we are into and not what your goal is. I want to powder this gloomy view of society and I want the people who are delivering services to ameliorate the gloom. I would like to think positively about the human resources that all of us represent to be directed towards some new goals.

I feel sad about many of my peers who are so brain damaged, not brain washed but brain damaged, by society that we devalue ourselves, we lie about our age, we dye our hair, we take elaborate precautions never to disclose how old we are. And in the process we waste ourselves; we flush away the kind of resource that we have got that could save ourselves and save society. So one of the first things that I say to my peers is, "Look, shape yourself, get up off that rocking chair, get out of that playpen--use the experience that you have got."

Only we who have nothing to lose can change the system. Now the people who are caught in the systems, and some of you here are caught in systems, you cannot escape if you step out of line--you lose your necks or your shirts, or however, you are penalized. You are caught by the system. But we can be your advocates, we can be your tools. We can be sent on your dangerous missions, to rock the boats, to rattle the cages that you are imprisoned in, and exercise some very important changes. We can use our very weaknesses, our deprivations, our losses, our infirmities as powerful and devasting social comment. I would like to cite an instance or two: Olive Shepard, now deceased, just six weeks before she died, took part in a large public demonstration that we helped organize in the public Board meeting of the Southeastern Transportation Authority. We were pressing for mass transportation that really worked; and for busses that were really built for people instead of to make more profits for General Motors. Olive Shepard suffered years with lupus and her legs were terribly bruised and bandaged and were horrible to look at. She could have stayed home and hidden them and said, quite rightly, I am too ill to take part today. But Olive came with a very slick piece of guerilla theater. She had with her a box that was the exact height of the bus step--two and a half feet high. And she demonstrated for those high and mighty members of the Transportation Board how impossible it was for a person with any kind of handicap, young or old, to get on that bus step. They had just completed a big, fat contract with GM to manufacture more of those busses, some 30 million dollars worth of no-human transportation equipment. And one of the members of that Board had to get down and help Olive onto that bus, that box, the symbol of the bus step. I wager that he never forgot it; he probably never rode the bus himself. But Olive with her weakness, Olive with her infirmity that did her in six weeks later, was a very powerful and effective social critic.

So, there is no excuse for us at any age or at any stage of our human impairment to not be the critics of this sick society, and in the process, to begin to heal it of its infirmities. And, to use our infirmities as powerful antibodies that will ultimately release new healing agents. The role of old people as social critics cannot be underestimated. And I would hope that you will find in your centers

and in the places where people are having congregate meals increasing numbers of people who are complainers. And instead of putting them down, that you would enhance them. And, that you would channel their rage and their sense of indignity and cherish this and encourage them in their social protest, because they are your advocates for some very important changes if you seek them.

Now, another role for old people in our society, is to test new models; to test new models of thinking, to test new models of living. New economic structures are all possible for us because we alone have nothing to lose. Some of you have heard me say no matter how many times I demonstrate, no matter how many times I yell and holler, I am not going to lose my Social Security. It is not very much, but it is mine. Nor will I jeopardize my pension. Those of us who are in this happy state of freedom, if we are truely liberated, can be the liberators of society. And, indeed, this is our vocation.

What are some of the new models that we ought to be trying out and developing? One is a very firm and continuing commitment to a coalition with the young. It is marvelous, it is just one of the great surprises in my life, that I have been permitted to know and work with so many young people who are deeply concerned and committed to this burgeoning field of the aged. It is just a fantastic thing. They are beyond the professionals who are committed to this task. There are many, many other young people in high school, in junior high, in all levels of college and graduate school training who can be our co-conspirators for change. And this coalition, again, is an element of surprise for society, which has taken elaborate pains to isolate both the young and the old. The model of a coalitional style between the young and the old is something that our society really needs for continuity, for a continuum of life, and for the joining of enthusiasm and the idealism and the vigor of youth with the rememberance and the experience and the acquired skills of age. Now, those two forces can be harnessed, and if you have the capacity to keep that in tandem, then some great changes could come about, despite all the contrivance and connivance of society to keep us apart.

Let me run down some of the commonalities between the young and the old that we discover immediately as soon as we get together: Both the young and the old have an identity crisis. We have an identity crisis if we are women and our lives have been defined by husbands and children and we have never discovered who we are until we are widowed and alone. We have an identity crisis if we are career people and are terminated and separated from our jobs. And if we worked all our lives, as most of us who are gainfully employed have done, it has completely preoccupied, comletely preempted all of our life, just earning a living and surviving. And when that is gone, we are gone. And many, many people do not have the psychic energy or the social skill, the way back into a system to use the experience they have got. So they are lost, destroyed and ultimately, rather quickly, die. So that the loss of identity and the recovery of identity for the young and the old is a very important and profound search and it can be accomplished to such beautiful ends--together.

Another kind of commonality is the way in which our cashless society that is built on a whole complex of credit mechanisms, deprives the young and the old of any kind of viable credit. The young have to be sponsored by their parents in order to get credit. And the old folks have to be validated by our adult children in order to get credit. There is not a bank--there are a few banks that we have rattled and a few places that give loans--that will give a personal loan to a person over 65. And, the only reason you get it is because you have got money in the bank and then you do not really need that damn loan if you have got money in the bank. But the banks need to be reminded. The bank president is a human being and he too is going to get old, and he too may have trouble getting credit. And the young have to be released to be the protestors with us, to fight a system that is demonic and depressing for both the young and the old. And if we could really shape up some of those systems it would help people in the middle years tremendously.

Another thing that young people and old people have in common is the drug scene. This may surprise you. The young people are the victims of the pushers and we are victims of pushers too; only they are a different group of pushers, sedating us almost to an inch from oblivion, a vegetable state. I am talking about the drug companies that use us regularly as guinea pigs and that foist off on the doctors all kinds of samples that the doctors try out on us to help us forget our aches and to bury our infirmities in drugs. So, the young and the old have a great deal in common on the drug scene. No old person in his right mind ought not to understand the young, that they smoke grass. You know, that is the way it is.

Both the young and the old have problems with sex. And they are both treated in kind of an infantile way. There is an awful lot of research to be done on the way people in institutions, old people in institutions, and young people who are in institutions are emasculated, castrated by systems. In most retirement homes, you are not permitted to visit the opposite sex in their rooms. In one, I understand, you can visit up to 10 o'clock, but you keep the door open--always. And in many nursing homes, it is the rule to separate spouses to the man's wing and the woman's wing. At the moment in life when one needs companionship and love and the ability to touch and be with the people that you have lived with and whom you have loved, the system deprives you of it, terrible, tyranical, inhuman. And this is by the best, well-meaning people in the world who are taking care of us wrinkled babies. We could go on and on.

This is the age of self-determination and liberation, and the radicalization of the elders is following in a noble train of liberation movements. The black people started it in this country and made it stick that this is a racist society. You in Georgia know exactly what this means, because some of those dearly fought battles were fought on these grounds where Martin Luther King lived, died and was buried. This is where the liberation struggle had reality. The women who are seeking freedom from the domination of men and their own personhood are reminding institutions, states, churches, all kinds of places where men and women work, live and have their being, that ours is a sexist society. And the old people now are making a very powerful point, hopefully, that ours is an ageist society, discriminating against the young and the old only on the basis of chronological age. It is assumed that when

you are young, your experience, what you know, does not matter because you have not had any experience, you have not lived that long. And it is assumed that when you are old, what you did way back is worthless. The whole society has been seduced by what I call a Detroit Syndrome--only the latest model is desirable, only the latest model is sellable. We make things not to last but to wear out, and very powerful social forces constrain us to buy new things because the old things are useless. The same kind of obsolescence our technologically sophisticated society builds into people, and we regularly scrap-pile them. The abominable, the abysmal, the wanton waste of people in our society is what the powerful battle against ageism is all about. This is why we need to be advocates of each other to correct this waste.

Every institution, every corporate structure ought to be challenged on the basis of an arbitrary, fixed, compulsory retirement rule. That simply has to go. This morning you heard some demography. If by the year 2000, that is 26 years of grace we have to correct this waste, if by the year 2000 half of the people alive will be scrap-piled, arbitrarily and compulsory retired, the pure economics of it is frightening. Who is going to pay the bill to maintain us in near poverty? Who is? And who is going to do the work, and who is going to buy the goods? The whole thing will collapse. It will not only be sick, but it will be dead. And this policy has been so firmly ingrained that the cut-off date is not 65 but 60, and there is one big corporation that would have us out to grass at age 55. And there is no judgement on this kind of waste. It is assumed that that is the way it is; so there are all kinds of services, there are all kinds of mickey-mouse things to prepare people to play, to cultivate their hobbies, to take another trip. Not to challenge the system that makes trips unecessary; that is what it is all about. Now, lots of the people we talked with who are planning retirement policies in the personnel offices in these large and rich corporations say, "Well you see that is an impossible thing for us to attempt because this is the only way in which we can move out the people who are nonproductive." We are not impressed with that argument and we say that is no excuse for deplorably poor personnel work. Why haven't you, through the years, enabled people to grow and learn and become fully productive people? Why does there have to be within corpration society this steep pyramid of power, a pinnacle where there can be no movement on a horizontal plane? And no movement from one category of work and productivity and creativity to another without losing caste and losing face? We institute a monumentally wasteful policy to get rid of our foolish mistakes. This policy has to be challenged and changed. And you who are in academic circles ought to be challenging your systems on this very point, on tenure. People ought to be able to retire at 30, 35 if they want to. But there ought to be no cut-off date, whatsoever.

Trying out new models for size involves challenging corporate structure and there are a small group of Gray Panthers who are training themselves to be stockholders, responsible stockholders, getting up in stockholders' meetings and raising some very embarrassing questions. Just buying a share or two of stock--you know, with the present state of the stock market, it does not cost too much to get a share or two--can plug in on some very important work that needs to be done together across

corporate structures and keep that pot boiling. Now you have got potential recruits in all your centers, in all of the places where you move and have your being. You could maybe use a little of the pin money that you raise to buy a share or two of stock in each of the main oil companies. This is another kind of strategy, a new model.

Then, there is another way to defeat the whole economic system. That is to go the cooperative way, the communal way. Now, another new model that I think older people should be into, and this is why I believe so firmly in what you are doing in terms of continuing education. I would go beyond the goals that you have described in such a beautiful way so that one of the goals of continuing education would be that we will in our old age equip ourselves for this responsible role. You could develop cadres of old people clear across the state that would untimately get themselves onto every public board and begin to influence public policy for everybody. The transportation authority, the planning commissions at every level, the housing authorities, the school boards, the advisory group that oversees law enforcement and the police. There ought to be the component, the input of the elders constantly; not simply in terms of old folks' issues--that is not good enough.

We who are getting ready to meet our maker some time or other ought to have something other than our own selfish goals in mind. And our liberation is not just to get brownie points for ourselves, although God knows we need them. But for the humanizing of a whole society, for the governance of the whole tribe. We are the elders of the tribe. Now, we cannot be responsible tribespeople and elders without refurbishing our minds, without the mental stimulation of being with the young. That is why continuing education is so terribly important. And degrees would be skill banks; would be further validation of this critical role, this critical input. You could have a brain trust on any subject you want to address, that could be sent into high places. Developing a strategy with you, the professionals, could turn this whole state around and make the beautiful center that you have here an example for the rest of America. You have got many things going for you right here, and I dare you to dream big and dangerous dreams.

The other development of new roles for us old folks is in the role of consumer response and responsibility. We are the largest consumer of health services, as we know, and patients have rights. The American Hospital Association adopted a Bill of Rights for patients in 1972 that has not been implemented. All of you who have access to people who are ill, who are in hospitals or extended care institutions ought to be about the business of organizing patients' rights committees, and begin the first efforts of informing anybody who is infirm or ill of his or her rights. It will not get clogged in the channels that presently gum up the flow of information. Our Gray Panther groups in New York and in Chicago have taken on the mighty health empire. We have had a lot of fun teasing the AMA. We have got nuisance value, for one thing, but we have also got some very powerful allies. As responsible consumers of health services we are no longer going to take the kind of stuff that the medical profession has dumped on us, or the kind of wastage that goes on in every nursing home. We are still alive and are human beings. We care about a sick society, and we care about the people in all walks of life and at every age who are shafted by our present medical system. It is just awful.

Now, we have an ally with us, the Medical Committee for Human Rights. Some of you who were in the civil rights marches of an earlier decade know how important the Medical Committee for Human Rights was in binding up the wounds and going along the lines of march, the people who were walking in Georgia, in Mississippi, and other parts of the South. Now, that Medical Committee is still alive and they are powerful allies for taking on the AMA. These are not members of the AMA. They are respected members of the medical profession. They represent many of the brilliant young doctors, men and women, who have not gone the routine route. Another powerful ally of ours is the newly organized Geriatric Division of the American Nursing Association. They are tired of the cliche that the doctor is always right. They are tired of the technology that deprives them of the bedside care of the patients. They are tired of other kinds of things, the oppressive systems that collide and compete within the average hospital and the non-delivery system to people in the rural areas who are deprived of access to any medical care whatsoever. They are joined with two retired orders of nuns: The Sisters of Mercy and The Dominican Sisters. They are marvelous gifted women who have given their lives to serving others. In their old age, they are on the picket line. And it will not hurt our cause a bit to have them in their habits sitting on the front row.

The AMA Convention is having its meeting in all its glory in the Marriott Hotel in Chicago the latter part of June. And we are having our second counter-conference. We will have on our agenda all the things that the AMA will have on its agenda. And we will get headlines. We got headlines when we took on the National Conference on the Aging earlier this spring. The Chicago Daily News neglected to publicize the AMA's conference on the Aging. But we got lovely Gray Panther headlines saying, "The Gray Panthers Give AMA the Needle," and indeed we did. We cited the fact that there was no geriatric medicine being taught in any of the medical schools, that the whole medical profession is hung up on crisis medicine. There is little or no attention to health maintenance, to the positive health of body and mind. The prevention of disease is environmental protection; we need a massive medical assault on a sick society and the factors in the society that make people sick. Doctors continue to heal people one by one and send them out into a sick society only to be sick again. And this has to stop.

In five states there are hearing aid bills pending that have been bitterly opposed by the hearing aid dealers. In Iowa, Massachusetts, Maryland, New York, and Pennsylvania, bills have been introduced to protect the hard-of-hearing consumers from the fraudulent sales of hearing aids. And it will cost you, a consumer, upwards of 200, 300, to 500 or 700 dollars to buy one of them. And along with it you buy anywhere from a 100 to 150 dollars worth of service which you may or may not need. And you are probably being sold a hearing aid that will not help your deafness at all, although the hearing aid dealer has told you that it will cure your deafness, which is a lie. So the bill that we are shepherding through in those five states is to protect the consumer, to provide for the registration of the hearing aid dealer, and to restrain the hearing aid dealer from selling a hearing aid without a doctor's prescription. Accompanying that is a consumer's guide to

the hard of hearing, the hearing impaired. Incidentally, there are 15 million people with hearing loss in this country, and a large proportion of that number are over 65, so we are not dealing with an inconsiderable segment of society. We are dealing with a segment of society for which there is little public sympathy. Hearing-impaired people are the subject of cruel and insensitive jokes. Their desperation and their frustration are so very great because they are not tuned in to what is going on. They cannot even hear television, many of them, so they yield to the temptation of walking in the hearing aid shop and asking for a hearing aid. Or, some well-meaning child who is tired of yelling will buy somebody a Christmas present of a hearing aid that is just no damn good. So, consumers need to be protected, and hearing impaired people with their hearing impairment can be a very powerful force to get that legislation passed despite the powerful lobby of the dealers.

In conclusion, I would like to say some things to the professionals. This radicalization of the old folks, I hope, will not come too soon. You can help it move in a direction that I see needs to be reversed. So much of the work that is presently being done on the political level is addressed to old folks' issues, and probably in the short run this is necessary. We need basic changes in Social Security--I feel that the whole Social Security mechanism has to be completely overhauled, not just bandaids and patches here and there--major surgery. The whole pension system needs to be overhauled, and a lot of other basic changes need to be instituted. But beyond the so-called old folks' issues, there are basic systematic changes that have to be done for the benefit of our whole society. And we who are most free, if we are truly liberated, and if we are truly concerned about those who come after us and leaving a legacy of a peaceful and just society for our children and grandchildren, have to move away from a purely narrow self-interest role. You professionals can help us move in this direction to achieve some element of transcendence beyond our immediate needs, to look at the needs of society and our children, the young, who must be encouraged to stay alive and who will not survive without our good offices. Now, too, you are no longer to be paternalizing of us. In some instances you unwittingly are benevolent despots, with the best intentions in the world. You increase and compound our powerlessness. You rob us of the right to determine whether we are going to have cake or cookies or what games we will play or whether we will not play games. And your role is to energize, to organize, to enable us to be fully human; and to be the advocates of each other and to be the advocates of you, and of the goals that you seek.

Mass transportation was mentioned this morning and I am so grateful for the reports that were so carefully delivered of the discussions that you had yesterday. Mass transportation is a major system that does not work. When you organize a car pool, when you finance a van, that is just a bandaid, you take the transportation authority off the hook, you really do. They can get by with a non-delivery system. What we need to do is bust the highway trust and you have got the strength to do it right here. You know that 4¢ of every gallon of gas that is pumped goes into the highway trust fund to build more airports, more jetports. Millions of dollars are diverted from a transportation system that would serve the people instead just serve the politicians and the highway

construction people and the people who build jetports. They get rich out of that kind of contract. And the people whose land is bought get very rich out of that kind of jetport sale. But the people that Milo Fisher is talking about and that all of you can think about are deprived and forgotten and destroyed. We can get people to the moon. We have got all kinds of hardware moving around in space--billions for outer space--nothing for mass transportation. That ought to be on your agenda and you have got the troups to deliver a very powerful wallop on that whole thing.

Every one of your centers, every congregate feeding group could be a staging area for social action. Not everybody is going to get out and march, not everybody is going to yell. But a few will, and your job is to find those few and to encourage them and keep them at it and keep them alive so they will. Because massive forces will attempt to silence them and suppress them and put them aside. But they are your allies, they are your advocates. They constitute your new criteria of success to the extent to which you are able to mobilize them to be change agents.

Now, I happen to believe that there is a mighty universal plan that just might be the Creator's surprise, that the people nearest death, that have suffered the greatest deprivations of physical and mental loss, are the ones who are chosen in the 70s to point to the new life. The old folks, the people you love and serve, my peers need to be radicalized in their old age. There are three great things that happen to you when you get old, and I say this in love and encouragement to you young. For one thing, if you have done your homework, and you have got no excuse for not doing your homework because you have a new continuing education center here that will enable you to do your homework fulltime. You will deserve the right to speak your mind. And if you have had to hold your tongue in an earlier age, it is great to speak your mind in your old age. And the second privilege is that you will have outlived most of your opposition, and that is a really great benefit. And the third thing is really a kind of miracle, that out of this outreach and out of this new relationship with the young, a goal that trancends ourselves and our own selfish interests, comes a new kind of energy, a new life force that empowers even the frailest of us, like Olive Shepard, to turn this society around. Thank you.

CHAPTER VII

THE FUTURE OF CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE QUALITY OF OLDER PERSONS' LIVES

--DAVID G. SALTEN

David G. Salten

We live in a society almost hopelessly committed to economic forces which determine virtually every aspect of our lives. Since I believe that what is bad for America is worse for the elderly, it is appropriate to ask ourselves what is the general context of the society in which the special problems of the aged come to our attention. The theme of my address, "the future of governmental contributions to the quality of older persons' lives," appears dismal at this moment in our history. However, I hope that we are witnessing a short-range phenomenon in a long-term movement which will soon show improvement.

Permit me, preliminarily, to set forth some of my credentials, my own biases, so that you will have some better idea of the background from which I speak; perhaps, why I view things as I do. I am into the seventh decade of my existence. That gives me a sufficient credential as an older citizen. I have been serving as President of the National Council on the Aging for the last two years and have had some first hand experience with the elderly during many years of participation in that organization. I have a number of predispositions, biases perhaps, which I want to share with you because they affect so strongly my outlook on the problems of the elderly in this country.

I have a strong commitment to voluntarism, the belief that there is a voluntary sector in American society that gives our country a unique quality, making it markedly different from virtually every other nation in the world. It was a quality which Alexis deTocqueville described eloquently over a hundred years ago, when he made his remarkably insightful analysis of American society. DeTocqueville pointed out that only in America was there a third independent sector, that in addition to government and business, there existed in the United States, almost innumerable voluntary associations. Whenever a few Americans got together, they instantly organized themselves to do some good work. And they did this work without any thought of making profit or serving the government, --purely voluntary action. Those of us who have lived all our lives in America are so accustomed to this phenomenon of voluntarism that we tend to believe that this is a part of all human society. It is not. In most parts of the world, this three-sector balance is unknown. We take for granted the existence of a three-legged stool, the public sector, the private sector, and the voluntary sector. One of the enormous strengths of this nation, a strength which in many respects puts us ahead of other societies, is this commitment to voluntarism.

I shall return to this in a moment because I think so much of our work with the elderly must proceed through that voluntary sector. But I think it is important at this point to comment on a remark made earlier by one of our young reporters. He stated that "politicians will never vote against children and they will never vote against the older people." Now, I wish that were true, but, unfortunately, it is not. Politicians have voted against the old folks often, and voted against young people many,

many times. Politicians are not always fully aware, and not fully responsive to what the needs of people are.

I am saying that government must of necessity, and properly so, have a limited advocacy function. When the point was made earlier today that Mary Kay's group should have been more aggressive in its advocacy role, my own feeling was that the Commission here in Atlanta has already been aggressive enough. I question the appropriateness of placing too strong an advocacy responsibility on an agency of government, because I think this invites tyrannical government. What makes our country so uniquely strong is this ability to create an influence which is separate and independent from governmental power. I'm sure you have already detected my bias that no government can or should be trusted too completely. There must be voluntary associations of people who constantly watchdog the exercise of governmental power. I was glad to hear Jean Bartle say that all sorts of funding were required in our efforts for the elderly, not just the efforts of the federal establishment.

My second broad assumption is that most difficulties that arise in connection with the elderly in this country can be subsumed under a large over-arching problem. I wish I had a better word than "image" because the term has been so loused up by the advertising world. But I cannot think of another. The image of the elderly in America is disastrous; Maggie used the words "brain damaged." We have managed to give Americans an image of the elderly that is a mischievous source of innumerable problems. And so I tend to view many programs for the aged as subordinate to the main thrust of getting Americans to look at older citizens in a radically different way.

I believe education is the way to making the necessary change. That is why I come to this campus whenever I am invited. The potential of education to make a change in our present attitudes toward the elderly is one of the few hopes we have. I am thinking of education here not in the traditional, conventional mode which simply reinforces old stereotypes. I am thinking of a new kind of education, some of which is found here. Most importantly, however, we must appeal to the mass media. More Americans learn more from television every day than they learned or now remember from their long years of schooling. This would not be bad, except that so much of what they learn from television is learning things that are not so. The older I get the more convinced I am that many of our troubles arise not from people who have inadequate knowledge, but from those who believe things that are not really so. This excess baggage of erroneous beliefs that we carry around with us gets in the way of appropriate action more frequently than our lack of knowledge of what has to be done.

Lastly, I enthusiastically endorse Maggie Kuhn's emphasis on the need for transcendence in the long run. The way to make it good for the elderly is to make it good for all Americans. And when you are making it good for the elderly, you are making it good simultaneously for all Americans. Those approaches are best which simultaneously serve the highest policy and the broadest constituency.

I think we must be careful, therefore, in our advocacy positions not to define too narrowly what it is we are trying to do for older people. Whenever we do that, our selfishness in the long run undermines rather than enhances what it is we are trying to do.

With that introduction, I want to turn very briefly to the governmental picture. What is it we can expect from the government in the fiscal year 1975. the picture is extremely disappointing at the moment. We have not properly arranged our national priorities. We have a budget of unprecedented size, some 304 billion dollars, a figure impossible to understand unless you are a mathematician by trade; some 304 thousand million dollars, close to a third of a trillion dollars. These are enormous numbers which few of us can really visualize. Of that figure, some 86 billion dollars is going to the Pentagon. I am not arguing against our military expenditures, because I believe the present world political situation requires that we maintain a high level of military purposes and what it believes it can afford to assure a life of dignity for its older citizens.

Abruptly, we descend from hundreds of billions and tens of billions of dollars to the relatively small sums we are talking about for older people. Instead of dealing with billions, we are suddenly dealing with relatively small numbers: millions of dollars. I believe it was Senator Church who pointed out that in fiscal 1975, the Administration proposes to reduce funding for aging by 15 million dollars below the present appropriation, the sharpest reduction in the history of the Older Americans Act, a dubious distinction for the present Administration. At a time of extraordinarily high expenditures in all areas, the total amount of aid to the elderly is cut rather than increased. What it comes down to is that the new budget includes virtually no funding for every program which had been given an open-ended authorization under the Older Americans Comprehensive Services Amendments. In short, all the good rhetoric of the past few years has not been undergirded by money appropriations. In virtually every category the funds available have been reduced rather than increased. Fortunately, in some small areas, as in the areas of training, some slight improvements have been made. But when you see what the improvement amounts to, the sum, although not trivial, is pathetic in terms of what our needs are. The increase to be made available for the whole state of Georgia amounts to $50,000. Two educational institutions represented in this room have requested a sum equal to the allowance for the entire State.

To return to the pivotal problem, -- projecting a new image of the elderly in this country, I present for your consideration the thesis that the problems facing the aged could be minimized and in some cases eliminated if we had some way of doing away with the destructive stereotypes we hold on to concerning our older citizens. We have to start asking ourselves what we elderly really are like and what we can really do.

Looking back historically at the approach we have made to the improvement of life for the elderly, we recall that perhaps the first problems to be recognized were the biological and medical implications of aging. Early on we became concerned with the question of how to extend

physical functioning of the human organism. Gradually this approach was expanded to include the concern for the psychological and emotional factors. But as we studied these psychological and emotional factors, we became increasingly aware of the fact that what appeared to be individually caused was really an outcome of social factors, a conclusion we have heard frequently voiced at this meeting the last few days. It is not just a question of adjucting an older person to a society. All too frequently in is the society which needs to be changed.

Now, we know that age is as much determined by psycho-social factors as the simply biological. Sociology is fully as important as physiology in understanding the life of an aging person. On my last visit down here, I told Barbara (Payne) and her group that I was delighted that a gerontology center in Georgia was developing around a sociological-psychological emphasis rather than around a biological-physiological one. This is precisely the approach we need most urgently. Also, we are recognizing more fully that the problems of the aging are most importantly related to the economic and social status of older citizens, an insight which has been expressed eloquently and repeatedly here the last few days. We were all struck by Dr. Binstock's point that despite actual increases in Social Security, the net result of other economic factors has left our older people in many respects poorer than they were. Remember that we live in a society where, by and large, economic level determines social level.

Combining all these concerns--biological, psychological and social--we wind up with a new idea of retirement and its consequences for the individual and for society. The elderly do not want to be rejected, they do not want to be respected or honored simply because they have lived a long time. Not that there is anything fundamentally wrong with that idea. In my travels I have observed many cultures which venerate anybody who is successful at staying alive. The mere ability to remain alive constitutes a component of respect and there is much to be said for that approach. But we seek something more today. We want to be respected, not just because we have managed to stay alive. We want older people to be honored for what we are still doing now and what we are able to contribute tomorrow.

The new image of the elderly that we have to develop will say to the young people and the middle aged, "Look at us; your picture of older people is out of focus. We have the capacity to work and contribute." How tiresome we older people feel when young people say we have made America great and now we deserve to be rewarded. And they send us home... how ridiculous and cruel. We older people want to continue to be used, respected for what we can do. And we do not want to receive "well-deserved rewards," "being sent out to grass," as Maggie puts it.

Goethe wrote, "Man does best, after all, when he shapes his surroundings himself instead of taking shape from them. The whole world lies before us like a great block of stone before the architect, who only deserves that name when out of the crude mass he can build a vision of his soul. And this, with the utmost economy, clearness and decision. Everything outside us is only raw material." I might add, everything inside us. "But deep within our spirit lies the creative power which can fashion forth

what ought to be, and will not let us stop until we have produced it either within ourselves or outside us in one way or another." This vision of Goethe, this view of a fuller life--"to fashion forth what ought to be" --seems to me to be the inner core of the new image of the elderly.

Only as we build the new image will the political power of the elderly on governmental operations be maximally effective. The members of the Congress, the members of your state legislature, your local lawmakers, all are marvelously sensitive to what the people want and demand. It is our own self-image which has attenuated our own expectations, our own aspirations. We want the elderly not to be regarded for their eccentricity. We don't want older people regarded as a perpetual source of problems. We are not always part of the problem; very often we are part of the solution. The problems we associate with the elderly are the results of constraints, sometimes downright obstacles, we have placed in their path. The problems we have been listening to these last two days; the problems of inadequate income, inadequate medical attention; inadequate transportation; inadequate housing -- the litany is very long -- these were not created by the inadequate elderly. They are the result of inadequate public policy, of inadequate understanding of what Social Security, housing, health care legislation should be in the 1970s and beyond.

The mass media stress the frailties of old age. Look at how we are presented on television: crotchety, irascible, short-tempered, stupid: much of this apparently brought on by chronic constipation. What an unattractive group we are--presented to tens of millions of people hour after hour by the mass media, especially the tube that people look at for many more hours a day than they look at books or any other source of communication. Our present social pattern defines the role of older people. Our mass media label them obsolete, compels them to retire, diminishes their social status, directs impediments against the use of their potential, so that this great potential is wasted, atrophied, and finally extinguished.

America's elderly, numbering over 21 million, are being subjected to the worst type of segregation, because, in effect, society does everything it can to segregate them from life itself. They are looked upon as some kind of shameful secret, kept out of sight, out of hearing, and all too often out of mind. But all this does not have to be. There can be gold in the golden years. I am not suggesting that all the elderly are wise and can or even want to remain actively involved. But in a population of 21 million aged, a population greater than the population of our six smallest states combined, there are millions of well and able, as well as those with problems and the frail, the poor and the isolated.

The image problem of the elderly contains some interesting anomalies. People of position, wealth, or popularity who continue to function are rarely thought of as old. We all know that Jack Benny is well over 39. But how many of us know he is well over 80? Who thinks of the most widely viewed actress in America as a senior citizen? But Lucille Ball is a senior citizen. We overlook the age of older people who go on doing things.

Meanwhile, the mass media continue to project negative attitudes, inaccurate information and stereotypes of aging which become self-fulfilling prophecies. Indeed, television, with the greatest impact among the media, actually reinforced public misunderstanding. Unfortunately, and this is worst of all, the elderly accept these notions, accept this negative portrait of themselves. Along with their youth they are deprived of their self-esteem.

Fortunately, there are a number of agencies -- governmental, educational, voluntary -- combining in an effort to change all of this. The National Committee on the Aging, during the early days of my presidency, put together a project to study the mass media, particularly the electronic media, with the idea of establishing a national media resource center which would relate information about aging to the needs of the media. Our NCOA report concluded, "Meaningful change can come about only if there is a long-term commitment to provide the media with the necessary leadership and catalytic action to assist it develop, utilize and distribute programs and services for and about America's elderly."

At this last public talk I shall be making as President of NCOA, I am glad to tell you as my own administration draws to a close, that we have developed an arrangement with a major philanthropic foundation, the Clark Foundation, to establish under NCOA auspices a national media resource center. The first funds for this project have already been received, and we have just completed a nationwide search for leadership. The former president of a national network will be working with us. We are really going to learn the language of the enemy. We will now have in our own corner one of the men who in the past helped project unfortunate stereotypes about older people. We shall tap every source we can to help us project the new image that is required. We are going to provide the media with the necessary leadership, the material they need so desperately.

As a first step, a comprehensive study of public attitudes about the aging has been undertaken, and is already well underway. We plan to spend some $300,000 to develop the most comprehensive study of aging ever made in this country. It is encouraging, just for a change, to be dealing not with piddling sums, but with funds appropriate to the size of the problem we face. Our NCOA resource center will not only stimulate the media to develop more space and coverage of aging, but encourage a more positive and accurate view of our older people. We are going to have private meetings with key leaders of the press, the films, television, and radio. That will get to the legislators and the legislative halls throughout the country. We are going to have background briefing and editorial conferences in some 15 to 20 cities of media resource representatives and editorial boards of newspapers and magazines. We are going to conduct seminars for public service directors of radio and television stations. We are going to conduct regional workshops directed to the graphic and electronic media. We shall issue a monthly newsletter which will go out to all the mass media and establish systematic contact between our resource set-up and the agencies which day after day presently project what we consider to be an offensive image of tens of millions of Americans. And we shall provide the nitty-gritty items like press kits, mats, feature stories and photos which we will prepare and

distribute to the people who run the mass media throughout the nation. In short, there is a partnership now of various agencies, governmental, educational and voluntary, to create a new image of the elderly in the mass media.

I want to close with a tribute to the leadership of this emerging gerontology center -- Barbara Payne and James Thorson. They are demonstrating how inter-institutional cooperation can provide an educational facility which will not only diffuse knowledge but build a more humane and stable social order -- a society in which some measure of human agony can be replaced by the joy which flows from the never ending use of human potential.

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